

ISLAMIC CULTURE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

Al-Andalus from the tenth to twelfth century

Esperanza Alfonso

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From the tenth to the twelfth century, a Jewish elite living in al-Andalus – the area under Islamic control in the Iberian Peninsula – created a culture that would be later conceived in Jewish imagination as a Golden Age.

This book brings under analysis the construction of Andalusi Jewish identity by examining the representation of, and attitudes toward, Muslims and Islamic culture in a variety of Jewish sources. Sources used include introductions to grammatical and lexicographical work, large poetry collections, ethical and philosophical treatises, chronicles, treatises on poetics, and letters sent to various communities or exchanged among individuals.

Esperanza Alfonso's thorough reading of this wide range of sources will make the book appealing not only to specialists in medieval Hebrew and Arabic literatures but also to scholars and researchers of comparative literature and cultural studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Islam on the Iberian Peninsula in the first quarter of the eighth century brought about radically new developments in the political, social, and intellectual lives of Peninsula Jews. Documentary evidence on the state of the Iberian Jewish communities at the dawn of the century is scarce, yet all signs indicate that under the effects of hostile Visigothic law they had declined significantly and may have been on the verge of extinction. In contrast, beginning in the eighth century, the new framework granted by the Islamic legal system to Jews and Christians provided an opportunity for revival. As elsewhere in the Islamic world, Jews, along with other religious minorities holding sacred Scriptures, such as Christians and Zoroastrians, came to be considered *Ahl al-Kitāb* (“People of the Book”) and, as such, were made subject to a special legal status, that of *dhimma*, which entailed certain social restrictions but in turn accorded them protection under Islamic rule.

Nothing can be said with certainty about the history of the Jews in al-Andalus (the Iberian territory under Islamic control) in the following two centuries. Aside from a few indirect references that confirm their easy integration into society at large, the sources are largely silent. The first documents written by Jews that have come down to us coincide with the long rule of the Umayyad ‘Abd al-Rahmān III (912–61), who proclaimed himself caliph in 929. In a time of political stability and economic prosperity, ‘Abd al-Rahmān III’s centralizing policies proved crucial for Jewish participation in the political and social life of the newly created Caliphate. At this juncture, and at a significant delay compared to the Eastern Mediterranean and North African areas, the intellectual production of Andalusi Jews exploded with unprecedented force.

Eventually, after a period of civil war (1009–31), the Caliphate fell and al-Andalus broke apart into tiny Taifas, or petty kingdoms. Conditions for the development of all aspects of Jewish life, however, remained steadily favorable. It would only be with the arrival of the Almoravids, a Berber dynasty from North Africa, on the Peninsula in 1086 that an exodus of the Jewish population to the Hispanic kingdoms began to take place, as a result of the their policy regarding religious minorities. In 1147, after a second more radical North African reformist movement – that of the Almohads – took over the territory

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under former Almoravid control, the remaining Jewish communities in al-Andalus were virtually dismantled.

Throughout the last century scholars have looked at the specifics of cultural contact between the Jewish minority and Andalusi society at large from numerous angles. However, the voices of the Andalusi Jews themselves, that is, their self-awareness as a community and their perception of the otherness of the society in which they found themselves, have been largely overlooked for reasons I will explore in what follows. The present book arises from the conviction that this neglected inquiry is essential to understand cultural contact as a whole and from a desire to bring it into sharper focus. It intends to examine strategies of constructing identity among Andalusi Jews from the tenth to the late twelfth century, through a consideration of the representation of and attitudes toward Muslims and Islamic culture as recorded in Jewish sources.¹

As entrenched and all-pervasive as ideas of identity and otherness might be in human relations and in history, their framing as theoretical issues worthy of scholarly inquiry has had a relatively short history and in many ways is peculiar to the modern world. The concept of identity, in fact, is *stricto sensu* a by-product of nineteenth-century cultural nationalism, although it did not become popular in social studies and the humanities until the 1950s. Directly related to a national identity is the idea of otherness inasmuch as identities are constructed by opposition to an Other.² In its original nineteenth-century setting, identity was first and foremost understood as cultural – cultural differences serving as the fundamental distinction between political entities. Within this framework, colonial enterprises had a key role in providing the Western world with a distant Other against which to define itself.

The origins of cultural identity and otherness as concepts coincided with the birth of anthropology and history as disciplines. In its early stages, anthropology was primarily concerned with contemporary non-Western cultures; hence, the query into otherness became its very foundation. As for historians – including literary historians – their object of study was the past and, inasmuch as anthropologists had to translate the non-Western Other for a Western audience, historians had to make the otherness of the past intelligible for modern readers. Since the present project is concerned with the description of the Other, it embodies a quest that is, by definition, anthropological. Because this quest is to be pursued in the context of the past, references to and awareness of constructions of that past by historians will be imperative.

The anthropological view of identity and otherness, as observed, began to take shape in a precise historical context, namely that of post-Enlightenment colonialist Europe. This view, however, has greatly evolved during the past century, coming to encompass issues of race, class, gender, post-colonial theory and, ultimately, multiculturalism and globalization. Moreover, significant conceptual changes also can be traced along the way. First, the idea of culture as a bounded sphere that can be delimited and described in its entirety has been

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increasingly questioned.³ Second, having been identified formerly with the existence of an eternal essence that transcends place and time, identity has come to be understood as an ongoing process of construction, redefinition and negotiation, strongly rooted in history. Third, the idea of radical otherness has been largely abandoned. The utterly different, exotic Other made some sense in the context of early twentieth-century colonialism, but contemporary trends tend to treat otherness as a relative quality, rather than as a stable, distinct category. Finally, the relationship between the Self and the Other is currently seen as constantly in the making, as reversible and as not necessarily binary.

Because otherness has been, from the outset, the object proper of anthropology, the fact that anthropologists were first in bringing the validity of the category into question should come as no surprise. Since at least the early 1980s, if not before, some anthropologists, as they became progressively more interested in the study of texts, began to treat the textual productions of their own discipline as a narrative, a discourse to be critically analyzed.⁴ The self-reflective mode in which they engaged has brought about what some consider to be a crisis, others a productive self-reflection. Those who have engaged in this critical trend not only advocate a reconstruction of the social and political frameworks in which anthropology came into being, as well as the ways in which its study was institutionalized, but also question their own authority to identify an Other and capacity to understand and translate that Other.⁵

A similar revision has been taking place among historians in the last decades regarding the evolution of the historical discipline and, ultimately, its capacity to deal with the past, their Other. Following the lead of the anthropologists, some historians have begun to treat nineteenth-century historical writing as a rhetorical structure.⁶ They have drawn attention to the specific historical circumstances and particular intellectual, social, and institutional frameworks in which it was produced. This general movement toward self-scrutinizing historical writing holds true for scholarship on the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, different studies on nineteenth-century Jewish thought have concurred in stressing the fascination that Sephardic Judaism⁷ held for German Jews in general and for the Wissenschaft des Judentums (“The Scientific Study of Judaism”) movement in particular. Ismar Schorsch, among others, eloquently describes how members of this group projected their yearning for political integration onto the remote past, finding the Sephardic conception of Judaism a valid model for modern times.⁸ The values that they perceived in Sepharad, namely openness to philosophy and to other cultures, were a projection of German-Jewish sensitivities with regard to the transformations of modernity and the role of the Jewish minority in Germany’s cultural renovation. Medieval Sephardic Jews, as opposed to their modern Ashkenazi counterparts, epitomized, in the view of nineteenth-century emancipated European Jews, the formula of full participation in society at large while maintaining a Jewish identity. As Schorsch remarks, the fact that the ultimate appeal of what he calls the “Sephardic mystique” derived from its Greek core was far from accidental. Sephardic Jews were said to have played a

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salient role in the translation of ancient Greek philosophy from Arabic into Latin, and Greek philosophy was the very essence of modern European culture.

Recent scholarship on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spanish historiography has accounted for a parallel, yet significantly different, reading of medieval Sephardic Judaism among Spanish scholars. While exponents of the Wissenschaft des Judentums were captivated by the Jews' integration into Islamic society, this was not the primary concern of their Spanish colleagues. In Spain, illuminating Sepharad was coupled with and often utterly subjugated to the more acute problem of coming to a better understanding of al-Andalus, and the study of both societies was only justified inasmuch as it could clarify the essence of the emerging Spanish nation. As it recently and very convincingly has been argued, the history of medieval Jews and Muslims directly challenged the construction of modern Spanish nationalism, in that its plurality countered the alleged principle of coherence and unity that formed the past of all other European nations.⁹

In their efforts to conform to certain aspects of German culture, members of the Wissenschaft des Judentums turned Sephardic philosophy and Hebrew literature into privileged objects of study. Similarly, in an effort to legitimize the study of medieval Jewish and Islamic cultures and incorporate it into university curricula, Spanish scholars focused almost exclusively on cultural history and artifacts. The literature and art of Arabo-Muslims and Jews were perceived as contribution to the general Spanish cultural legacy, to the point of becoming the national property of the state.¹⁰

The need of nationalist historiography to assume new institutional frameworks resulted in an upsurge of foundational myths. The Wissenschaft des Judentums coined the myth of the so-called “Sephardic mystique,” the characteristic feature of a perceived “Golden Age” of Jewish culture, and conceived as full participation in an Islamic state that provided Jews with ideal conditions for intellectual development and integration. Mark R. Cohen has shown how this myth was eventually contested by a counter-myth that claimed Jewish suffering under the yoke of the Islamic state.¹¹ In Spain, likewise, two opposing myths came into being from the outset. In liberal circles, there was a myth of tolerance, that of “Las Tres Culturas;” against this, and among traditionalists, was a Gothic-Catholic model said to be resistant to any external influence on Spanish culture.¹² In short, in their attempt to understand the medieval Other, nineteenth-century nationalist scholars were, first and foremost, justifying an invented Self. The difference was that the Other these scholars had to translate to their contemporaries was not as exotic and distant, as the colonial Other was to European Orientalists, but very closely related to them.

Far from being submerged in outdated bibliographies, stereotypes and romanticized images of medieval Iberia have proven extraordinarily resilient, recurrently resurfacing throughout the twentieth century. There are a number of reasons for this: first, the shift of Jewish studies to Israel again placed the study of Sephardic Judaism within the context of a national project.¹³ Second, the 1898

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crisis that brought the Spanish colonial presence in the world to an end, the civil war and ensuing dictatorship, and more recently, the system of autonomies that are part of Spain's current democracy, created political conditions in which certain readings and interpretations of the Middle Ages became convenient. Third, multiculturalism, especially in its American setting, has also come to resuscitate romantic views of Jewish life in Iberia.

The interdisciplinary fertilization that critical theory has experienced in past years has brought about a progressive blurring of differences between anthropology, history and a cluster of related fields in the human and social sciences.¹⁴ Similarly, the distance between national traditions in scholarship has diminished increasingly.¹⁵ Highly ideological and essentialist explanations of medieval Iberia seem to be relegated more and more to publications intended for the broader public. Overtly ambitious, all-encompassing syntheses of cultural contact raise eyebrows among serious scholars, who regard them with suspicion, if not with open contempt.

Today, scholars tend to investigate specific issues of cross-cultural contact, without engaging in the development of grand theories. Some promising new fields have turned their attention to questions of cultural contact, such as comparative law and comparative hermeneutics. However, it is perhaps within philosophy, literature,¹⁶ and comparative religion that most cross-cultural contributions continue to appear. Thorough prior knowledge of the different peninsular societies, languages and cultural traditions on their own terms is becoming the norm, and is seen, increasingly, as a fundamental precursor to any comparison between them.¹⁷ A general trend observable in various disciplines is the progressive abandonment of the idea of “influence” in favor of a more complex reconstruction of the circumstances under which cultural contact and cultural change actually took place.¹⁸

Despite this burgeoning interest in the various aspects of cultural contact, the representation of otherness among Andalusi Jewish authors has been addressed only sporadically, partially, and most often not as an end in itself.¹⁹ The reason for this gap lies first and foremost in the nature of the source material. The fact that medieval Jewish authors did not write openly on Muslims and Islamic culture has been widely recognized.²⁰ Moreover, in those instances in which the sources register an explicit assertion of difference vis-à-vis Muslims and certain aspects of Islamic culture, the highly rhetorical and cryptic nature of the references contributes to deter scholars from pursuing the inquiry much further. In contrast, several monographic works have been published over the last decades on medieval Muslim authors' attitudes toward Christians and Christianity and vice versa.

Against this general tendency toward neglect in scholarship, two very recent works have made significant breakthroughs in matters of representation. The first, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature*, by Tova Rosen,²¹ deals with gendered othering; that is, it reflects upon how medieval

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Jewish sources written almost exclusively by men represent women. The second, by Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain*,²² analyzes a select group of literary and historical texts in which Andalusi Muslims and Jews represent one another. Through the analysis of individual figures, Brann emphasizes the construction of social meaning within a particular context. Both books share not only a common goal in bringing issues of representation under close scrutiny, but also a similar concern in decoding the rhetoric of the text by means of methodological tools current in literary criticism and the social sciences.²³

This study will follow the lead of these two works, exploring the construction of the Andalusi Jewish identity by examining the representation of, and attitudes toward Muslims, and Islamic culture in Jewish sources.²⁴ It is not motivated by a positivistic desire to distinguish former myths from truth, nor does it intend to capture glimpses of a hypothetical “medieval mind.” Rather less ambitiously, it will attempt to offer a close reading of cultural contact in al-Andalus through categories such as identity and otherness that are meaningful to the contemporary reader. Admittedly, these categories, as any other, are grounded in time, are embraced or disregarded by scholars, have their own shortcomings and, frustratingly, undergo constant redefinition.

Departing from an understanding of identity as a process, that is, as a concept that is constantly being created, and from the recognition that it is constructed within a system of representation, I will base this inquiry on two parameters – the narrative conventions of each text and the specific contexts in which these were employed. Regarding the first parameter, that is the narrative conventions of the text, I will assume that all texts are rhetorical, and that rhetoric, far from being a strategy to embellish the narrative, is in fact a construction of reality.²⁵ In sum, instead of treating rhetoric as an obstacle, I will treat it as the substratum within which identity is constructed. In this regard, I will proceed by close reading a wide range of genres that most times have a long, well established tradition, and sometimes are of recent creation. In examining them, I will attempt to identify terms, images of, and attitudes toward the Other, and point out the instances in which these terms, images, and attitudes are transferred from the genre they are proper to, into another genre. Some of the texts I present in this book are singular and unique, while others, as the poems I study in Chapters 3 and 4, are prototypes – that is, mere examples chosen among many similar ones. I am aware that the scattered nature of the discourse under focus, and the micro-analysis that I propose, may provide an overly fragmented picture. However, given the nature of the early medieval sources under analysis, fragmentation is not a flaw to overcome, but rather intrinsic to the sources per se.

As for the second parameter of the two mentioned above, I will conduct the close reading I propose by constant reference to a particular political and social framework. In short, I will attempt to identify images of, and attitudes toward the Other, and to determine how they are created, incorporated into the text, transmitted and understood under specific political and social circumstances.²⁶

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The history of the period covered in the book, the tenth to the twelfth century, is familiar enough to those interested in medieval Judaism so as to preclude historical introductions.

The book is divided into four chapters, each exploring a particular domain²⁷ – language, the world of learning, the current exile of the community among the nations, and the expected final redemption.²⁸ In each one of these domains certain images of, and attitudes toward Muslims and Islamic culture are developed. My aim is to identify the central images and notions in which collective Jewish identity is grounded. The first chapter explores the ways in which, by representing Arabic language, medieval Jewish authors transmitted, constructed, and changed the identity of the group. It is common knowledge that medieval Jews living in Islamic territory were highly Arabized, and that Arabic was the language they used in spoken and written communication, saving Hebrew for liturgical and poetic purposes. Certain questions remain, however: how did Jewish authors describe Arabic? With which language did they explicitly identify? Did they consider Arabic as an Other at all? How did their attitudes toward Muslims (and eventually Christians) affect or become intertwined with their attitudes toward the languages proper to these groups? This chapter will explore these three questions, and will attempt to determine the purpose that the authors under examination were pursuing in either explicitly advocating the use of Arabic or reacting against it.

Chapter 2 considers the attitudes held toward Islamic culture in its broadest sense. Jewish authors in the Peninsula not only spoke and wrote most of their prose in Arabic but also shared in the cultural models and paradigms current among Andalusi Muslims. This chapter traces opposition to literary genres or cultural forms perceived as imported from the Arabo-Islamic milieu, hence read as foreign to the Jewish *ethos*. It evaluates the role that this opposition had in the process of building identity.

In Chapter 3, the focus shifts from a linguistic/cultural domain into a quasi-theological and political one. Medieval Jews conceived their present as a time of exile. This extended exile, which had lasted for countless generations, resulted in a perception of the various lands in which they lived as spaces of domicile. The duality exile/domicile had a correlate in the understanding and representation of the societies amid which they lived. Within the theological framework of exile, the present was understood in terms of loss of national independence and subjection to the nations. Thereby, Muslims were the quintessential Other, described collectively as oppressors and enemies. Simultaneously, however, coexistence in al-Andalus, or remembrance of that coexistence in later periods in Christian Spain, made Muslims neighbors. This chapter thoroughly explores this double duality – exile/domicile, Muslims (and Christians) as enemies/neighbors.

Finally, Chapter 4 brings the analysis into the context of the messianic future. Like the three preceding chapters, this one isolates a specific domain, namely the speculation on the coming of the Messiah and the advent of the End of Days, and examines its rhetorical qualities. Messianic anxiety gave rise to a discussion

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on the role of Muslims and Christians in bringing about the end, and on how distinctions between groups would endure in the transition to the World to Come. In a broad sense, messianic hopes launched a reflection on the nature of otherness and the possibility of its eventual effacement.

Throughout the book, the chronology runs parallel in each chapter, beginning in the tenth century and closing in the late twelfth century. Some incursions into the ninth and the thirteenth centuries will be made to provide context of evidence when necessary. The geographical focus is al-Andalus. However, when relevant, I will consider also texts written in the Hispanic kingdoms and in North Africa by authors of Andalusi origin.

A final remark on terminology seems appropriate. The term Other, as used in this book, is a flexible label denoting difference, in a multiple and sometimes competing sense. The indeterminacy the term conveys is particularly suitable as often sources are not specific as to which Other they refer. There are times when the Other they point out is a generic one; in other texts it is not clear whether this Other denotes an ethnic or religious difference. Likewise, the texts to be analyzed sometimes present otherness in linguistic terms (the ones in which speech is different), in cultural terms (the ones whose literature is different or the ones who behave in a different way), and finally in religious terms (the ones who are not Jewish or who do not belong in the mainstream rabbinic tradition).

ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE

Hebrew vis-à-vis Arabic

Since the concept of identity as a topic worthy of scholarly enquiry can be traced back to nineteenth-century nationalism, it seems appropriate to take as a point of departure the key role played by language in articulating the idea of the modern nation. By the end of the nineteenth century, the German scholar J. G. von Herder already postulated that language should be understood not “as the medium through which speakers communicate” but rather as “the essence of a nationality.”¹ Critical studies of the emergence of European nationalism, beginning with Benedict Anderson’s ground-breaking *Imagined Communities*, restate from a critical vantage point the active role of language in constructing national identities. In the framework of Anderson’s definition of nation as an imagined political community, language is the primary means that communities use for self-definition.²

Anderson’s, widely embraced, and at times revised and contested concept of an “imagined community,” has also been applied to non-European and pre-modern contexts.³ Anderson himself did not restrict the concept of an imagined community to nation-states but also extended it to other types of groups, emphasizing the fact that large religious communities build their identities by means of a language and a script that they hold to be sacred. Hence, if a community, not necessarily a nation-state, can be defined also on the basis of the recreation of a number of shared elements and a common past, it follows that language plays a decisive role in shaping affiliation, and creating cohesiveness and communal identification. While representation and self-representation are not exclusively a matter of language, it is in the domain of language that they become explicit.

Far from being limited to the politics of nationalism, the use of language as a tool to create identity has proven instrumental in fields as diverse as anthropology, cultural studies, and socio-linguistics. The idea of language and its use are today perceived as inseparable from the way in which individuals and communities understand themselves and relate to each other in modern industrialized, multicultural and plurilingual societies. The symbolic dimension of language and its key role in creating inclusions and exclusions is well recognized.

While the idea of language in the context of nationalism tends to be essentialist and rigid, identifying one language with one nation, the study of contempor-

ary multicultural societies incorporates the idea of multiplicity, critical for the analysis here. While attempting to avoid the projection of a particular set of problems of contemporary multiculturalism onto a distant past, the role of language in building group identity as described by anthropology or socio-linguistics will also be instrumental for the study at hand.

Within the field of medieval Andalusi Jewish literature, language has received constant scholarly attention. Beyond the general mapping of language use among Andalusi Jews,⁴ two matters have been traditionally subject to critical scrutiny: first, the rapid Arabization of the Jews both in al-Andalus and in the rest of the Islamic world, a process that still puzzles scholars;⁵ and second, the use of Hebrew for poetry among Andalusi Jews.⁶ Recent scholarship has explored the interaction between Arabic and Hebrew from several different angles.⁷ Occasional attention has also been drawn to two aspects directly related to this chapter's main focus: the attitudes of medieval Hebrew speakers toward both languages, and the powerful role of language in shaping identity.⁸

Although fully aware of the role that language use or linguistic choice have in shaping communal identity, in the following pages, however, I will not be concerned, or just marginally concerned with both aspects. I will specifically focus, instead, on the discourse on language. To put it differently, what follows is not a study of socio-linguistics, but a study of the representation of language in Jewish sources, a study on how linguistic solidarities are created in order to imagine the Self. Both dimensions – the use of language, and the discourse about language in the sources – may, and often do, overlap and conflict with each other.

Language and the identity-building process in tenth-century al-Andalus

In the light of the preceding introductory remarks, it is hardly surprising that grammatical texts were among the first to have been commissioned by Jewish patrons in the Iberian Peninsula. It was not by accident that Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut, the famous tenth-century high official in the service of the Umayyad ‘Abd al-Rahmān III (912–61), who was deeply interested in creating autochthonous cultural institutions, commissioned his secretary, Menaḥem ben Saruq (b. 910–20), to write a dictionary of Hebrew roots. This dictionary, the *Mahberet*, was the trigger of the well-known dispute Menaḥem ben Saruq held with the poet and philologist Dunash ben Labraṭ (b. 920–25). In this dispute language became an object of contention. The comments on language by Menaḥem and his opponent,⁹ as well as those of their respective disciples who would eventually engage in the polemic, are a vantage point from which to observe contrasting ideas about the interaction between language and the construction of identity in tenth-century al-Andalus.

In his dictionary of biblical roots, or *Mahberet*, Menaḥem does not make explicit references to Arabic, nor does he openly compare Arabic with Hebrew. Scholars of medieval Hebrew philology have called attention to his silence on

Arabic, a language he was most likely fluent in, as well as his opposition to any comparison involving both languages. The omission is most striking as there were prior examples of comparative linguistics among early Hebrew grammarians, such as Sa‘adia Gaon (882–942), leader of the Babylonian¹⁰ Jewish community of Sura.¹¹ Furthermore, translations of the Bible into Arabic must have illuminated similarities between the languages brightly.

In contrast to his silence on Arabic, Menahem describes the Hebrew language in detail and at length. As is customary in philological works and dictionaries, the *Mahberet* opens with a fairly long discourse on the Hebrew language, which Menahem clearly identifies with the Jewish people. He does not compare one concept, the Jewish people, to a second one, the Hebrew language, but projects the structure and elements of the first concept onto the second. According to Menahem, God gave men the capacity of speaking,¹² and chose both the Hebrew language and the Jewish people, performing parallel wonders in each of them:

Inasmuch as God made wonders with all breathing creatures, but particularly with humans, by giving them excellence in language, He also made greater wonders with the people ('am) of His choice than with the rest of peoples and communities (*kol 'am we-ummah*) on the earth. Inasmuch as He made man more admirable [by giving him] language, He also made the Holy language more admirable than the language of all other peoples and nations. Before the capacity of thinking and speaking had been given to the inhabitants of the world, God chose this language, engraved it [on the Tablets] (Exodus 32:16), and spoke in it the day of His appearance in the Horeb.¹³

From Menahem's statement, the identity between the Hebrew language and the idea of the Jewish community becomes apparent. Hence, according to the passage just quoted, Hebrew is accorded what Anderson calls "a superterrestrial order of power."¹⁴ Language is the tool that constructs categories and hierarchies. Differences in language are projected onto differences among groups. Thereby, the ability to speak is what sets humans apart from animals, just as Hebrew sets the Jewish people apart from and above the rest of the nations.

In Menahem's view, the Hebrew language stands against all other languages, as the Jewish people stands alone vis-à-vis "the rest of the nations" (*kol 'am we-ummah*). All other peoples and communities occupy an intermediary position between animals and the most excellent men. The idea of "animalization" as a strategy to bring distance from the Other will come into focus as we proceed.¹⁵

In his *Teshuvot*, or "Answers" to the *Mahberet*, the tenth-century grammarian and poet Dunash ben Labrat, who studied with Sa‘adia Gaon, does not discuss the origin of Hebrew, but turns his opponent's mistakes into a potential danger for religion,¹⁶ as grammatical mistakes are the source in which exegetical mistakes originate. He scolds Menahem saying: "You misunderstood the interpretation of

interrogatives, you damaged God's religion and you shined in the council of the wicked.”¹⁷

In the second of the two introductory praise poems addressed to Hasdai ibn Shaprūṭ and to Menaḥem ben Saruq, respectively, that open his *Teshuvot* (“Answers”) to the *Mahberet*, Dunash ben Labrat wrote, in reference to Menaḥem: “He clearly examined the words with *patah* and *qameṣ*,¹⁸ returning the spirit to bodies and corpses...” although he concludes “He tore apart the sacred language, accumulating error upon error.”¹⁹ Here the analogical identification between language and people continues to operate. The concept of people is metaphorically projected onto that of language. Words, in fact, have bodies and corpses; language, as a living organism, is susceptible to be given life or death. Dunash, therefore, also endorses, yet in a more general way, the identification of language and nation.

While for Menaḥem Hebrew, metaphorically identified with the Jewish people, stands apart from a generic, dispensable Other, which includes all other languages and peoples, Dunash reduces the otherness of Arabic and Aramaic, showing how knowledge of these two languages can be put at the best service of Hebrew. Comparison with Arabic is, in his view, a useful tool for the philologist. He remarks that, in fact, Menaḥem himself explains several biblical terms according to their homophones in Arabic, yet he does not admit that he is comparing both languages.²⁰ As part of his strategy to reduce the otherness of Arabic he does not refer to it as the language of a different nation, nor does he allude to its non-Jewish speakers. If the Other is to be equated with danger and destruction, Dunash does not need an Other, as he considers the danger to come from within. It is not comparison with Arabic or Aramaic that will pose a threat to the Hebrew-nation binary, but grammarians’ incompetence and mistakes.

The grammatical dispute between Menaḥem and Dunash did not wind down in the aftermath of the latter’s response. On the contrary, it grew in intensity as his disciples, as well as Menaḥem’s passionately engaged in a heated argument. Dunash had opened his *Teshuvot* with a poem praising Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ, his patron, and so would do Menaḥem’s disciples. To these panegyrics, among the earliest to have been written in Hebrew in al-Andalus, I will return in successive chapters for different reasons, but there is an aspect of them that deserves attention at this point. One of the main elements in the description of the patron in both Dunash and Menaḥem’s disciples’ panegyrics is their patron’s military victory in battles fought against an Other easily identified as Christian. In Menaḥem’s disciples *Teshuvot ‘al Dunash* (“Answers to Dunash”) we read, regarding Ḥasdai: “He expelled the nation God cursed from his hiding place/he unsheathed his sword and annihilated the enemies/the ones who lied sprawling, like dogs (Isaiah 56:10). He destroyed the hideous, those who eat pork.”²¹ In turn, and in contrast to his enemies, Ḥasdai is portrayed as giving life to souls, as well as bodies, sustenance and support to the Remnant of Israel.²² This portrayal, as I mentioned, follows in the footsteps of Dunash’s and, by the same token, establishes the terms for the attack against him.

While Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ, the patron, is portrayed as fighting the enemy in battle, and as his community's savior, Menaḥem's students portray their teacher and Dunash, his opponent, in parallel terms within the domain of language. Like Menaḥem and Dunash, they took as a starting point a basic metaphor that identified language with nation. Thus, comparing Hebrew and Aramaic (as Dunash does) entails killing the souls and bodies of [Hebrew words].²³ Menaḥem's disciples elaborate further on a variant of the same conceptual metaphor, identifying language with a building. Hence, they assert Dunash "destroyed the sacred language, property of the Remnant, versifying Hebrew in strange meters/which ruins words with *pataḥ* and *qames*,²⁴ makes a breach in fences and walls."²⁵ In contrast, Menaḥem had "consolidated the building ... classifying its many parts in the proper place, establishing the norm and giving boundaries to the Hebrew language."²⁶ Menaḥem's disciples refuse to write poems in Arabic meter so as "not to trespass the boundaries of the ancestors and thus destroying the building of the old [generations]."²⁷ The metaphorical projection of the concept of a building onto the concept of language makes language a fixed entity, where nothing can be modified without altering its foundation and ruining the harmony of its components.

Two matters are related to the metaphor of Hebrew as a building: first, Menaḥem's disciples claimed to be following the tradition of the elders, those who established the foundation of Hebrew and the sense of its different parts, especially Sa'adia Gaon, who never used the Arabic meter.²⁸ By using Arabic as a source of comparison for Hebrew, and employing the meters of Arabic poetry, Dunash and his supporters had, therefore, diverged from tradition, their sole motivation being individual profit and self-importance. In what follows it will become clear that both supporters and opponents of comparative linguistics and Arabic metrics invoked Sa'adia's cultural authority at their convenience. The construction of "us" in the present is, hence, projected onto a very selective past, the opponent being the one who diverged from the norm and departed from tradition.

Second, the imagined community that constituted "us" had to be contrasted with the contemporary context so that potential differences between both terms could be resolved. In the tenth century, the weakness of Hebrew versus the strength of Arabic was evident. In the view of Menaḥem's students, Hebrew metrics and grammar were lost in the aftermath of the exile.²⁹ Here, again, the basic metaphor that identifies language and nation became operative: loss is a result of sin, while the survival, the retention of the language is due to God's mercy on His Remnant. In this understanding of the Hebrew language as a duplication of the Self, knowledge of language does not depend on comparative linguistics, but it is inextricably linked to an idealized past, and identified with national territory and security. The borders of that national territory are projected onto the borders of the language.

Shortly before 960, Yehudi ben Sheshet, Dunash's disciple, was the last scholar in the group known to have participated in the dispute. Just as

Menahem's disciples had tried to portray Dunash as an outsider to the community, Ben Sheshet aimed at strengthening the identification of Menahem's disciples with the Other. Once again, the most discernable Other in his writing was the Christian. Ben Sheshet makes abrasive allegations against three of Menahem's students, namely Judah ibn Dud, Isaac ibn Capron and Joseph ibn Chicatella. Judah ibn Dud is portrayed as "the son of the one who sold his primogeniture for lentils,"³⁰ and as "a young boar" (*na'ar hazir*);³¹ in terms of language he is a foreign speaker (*min ha-lo'azim*).³² All three elements seem to allude to his relationship or association with Christians. Similarly, and playing this time with paronomasia, Ibn Capron is mocked for his presumably Romance surname. He is portrayed as either "kid" (*gedi*) or "goat" ('ez) and addressed in the following terms: "You are a thoughtless kid that crouches over the abyss."³³ These two strategies to build otherness, namely the identification of the opponent with biblical characters and animalization, both would be common currency in religious poetry as we will see.³⁴ Contrasting "us" and "them" signifies, in Ben Sheshet's work, opposing "the word of the Levites, whose prestige reached all the islands" to "the animals voice and the kids' bray."³⁵

Except for two vague allusions to Muslims,³⁶ in Ben Sheshet's *Teshuvot* the Christian is the quintessential Other.³⁷ Ben Sheshet's strongest disdain for Christians, however, does not occur in the domain of language, but in the domain of exegesis.³⁸ In interpreting the opening of Psalm 63, Ben Sheshet charges Ibn Dud with a typically Christian allegorical interpretation of the Psalm.³⁹ He claims that it is by means of this allegory that "[Christians] eat pork, they eat and drink during [Yom] Kippur. Moreover, when they pray they do not perform ablutions. They do not practice circumcision. May they be thrown away from the assembly of the pure; may the one who was responsible for that, his descendants and those who befriend them, be cursed."⁴⁰ This is a significant passage in as much as it portrays a concept of identity, mainly based on the polarity between purity and impurity, an issue to be considered at length in the following chapters. All the elements outlined, namely eating pork, fasting, ritual ablutions, and circumcision, separate Muslims and Jews from Christians, one reason why mutual attempts of exclusion were made by association with Christians, rather than Muslims. Incidentally, early legal Islamic works written in al-Andalus look at Christians as *najas*, that is, capable of transmitting ritual impurity in their interaction with Muslims, a category which does not include Jews in Sunni Islamic law.⁴¹

Ben Sheshet's introduction to his *Teshuvot* closes with what could be seen as a restatement of the identification made between language and nation, based this time on territory. Thus, he says: "The words in the wise man's mouth are full of grace; those were the words of my teacher, who made a fence: the territory was the Law, language was its fence."⁴²

Was Arabic an Other in the eleventh century?

The adaptation of Arabic metrics into Hebrew, one out of the two important conflicts that had animated the tenth-century grammatical dispute between Menahem, Dunash and their respective disciples, had been superseded by the end of that century.⁴³ As for the method of comparative linguistics, although widely applied in the eleventh century, there is some evidence that it remained in need of justification. Among eleventh-century grammarians, Ibn Janāḥ (b. 985/990) presented comparison between Aramaic and Hebrew as a legitimate precedent for comparison between Arabic and Hebrew. Most roots – Ibn Janāḥ argued – are similar in Hebrew and Aramaic, both are used in *masorah* and distinguished Jews were fluent in Aramaic, as proven by Daniel and Ezra's biblical writings. Besides biblical Aramaic, examples of comparative linguistics in the sages of the Talmud and in Sa'adia's work further legitimize comparative linguistics. The following passage from Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-Mustalhiq* ("The Book of Annexation"), best exemplifies his position.

I will quote examples taken from the language commonly used in our time, which is Arabic, not with the intention of borrowing an argument from Arabic to Hebrew, but because I know that many Jews have never heard of an example given in that language, nor do they know it, and whoever listens to a new idea is led to discard it and consider it as false and stupid ... I only hope that those who are modest and humble will not blame me when they see my opinion, and my comparison with the methods used in Arabic, and they will not hold it against me, as I have not turned to the testimony of Arabic to consolidate my point of view, nor because Hebrew needs the help of Arabic. As I have already mentioned, given the fact that most of the Jews have never heard of anything similar, I was afraid that they would immediately reject my opinion. This is why I also show them that Rabbi Sa'adia, in his commentary to the *Sefer Yesirah* ("The Book of Creation"), in speaking of the inhabitants of Tiberias, who pronounce like *jim* the *yod* with *dagesh*,⁴⁴ points to a similar use among the Arabs and quotes what they have already written on this issue.⁴⁵

Ibn Janāḥ did not stand alone in feeling compelled to defend comparative linguistics among eleventh-century authors.⁴⁶ Recourse to Arabic would remain a reason for discomfort latent among certain circles of scholars until at least as late as the fourteenth century, when the defense of comparison would re-emerge in the work of the thirteenth-century kabbalist Azriel de Gerona, who justified the Talmudic use of a foreign language to explain Hebrew on the grounds of all the languages being already implied and contained in the Torah, and the fourteenth-century scholar Profiat Duran.⁴⁷

Many of the ideas discussed during the tenth century regarding the nature of

Hebrew and its relationship to Arabic converge in the introduction to a long linguistic poem, the *'Anaq* ("Necklace") written by the celebrated poet and philosopher Solomon ibn Gabirol (ca. 1020–ca. 1057). Ibn Gabirol offers a description of Hebrew unparalleled since Menahem's introduction to his *Mahberet*. Hebrew is presented as the sacred language that angels used to speak with God,⁴⁸ the primordial language from the separation of languages, kept within the lineage of 'Ever, Shem's grandson, from one generation to the next. Ibn Gabirol projects Hebrew onto the past and identifies it with the history of the nation.⁴⁹ It is the language of Abraham, father of multitudes, and Jacob, who lived as a guest in the lands of the *lo'azim*; it is the language of the Law and liturgical poetry. As with previous grammarians, the idealized, reconstructed past of language – always identified with a nation – is kept in tension with the loss of status of Hebrew that characterizes Ibn Gabirol's own time. For example, the poet complains about the state of decay of Hebrew among his contemporaries, an offense that he could only compare to that committed by the forefathers, the outcome of which was exile. His contemporaries do not speak Hebrew. "Half of them speak in the language of the Edomites, the other half in that of the sons of Cedar, so dark."⁵⁰

This obvious contradiction between the idealized, selected past and the present is conveyed with a strategy common in liturgical poetry and occasionally found in secular poems: the present is perceived as an inversion of the natural order of things that the past represents. The following two verses best exemplify this idea:

Is it acceptable that the mistress forgets [her]
Language, whereas her maidservant remembers hers?
'Alas! She did not guard her own vineyard,
But guarded those of strangers!' (Song of Songs 1:6)⁵¹

Ibn Gabirol's attitude on language in the *'Anaq* is perhaps one of the most illuminating examples of how the text creates solidarities that define the Self, and how the text relates to its context. Ibn Gabirol's complaints have often been used as proof of the lack of knowledge of Hebrew among Jews in eleventh-century Iberia, that is, as a testimony that casts light on the poet's contemporary context. This reading, however, only makes sense when one ignores the literary framework into which the poet's remarks are offered, interpreting the text as a mirror of its immediate social context. However, a number of elements are to be taken into consideration. First, the lines just quoted are part of the introduction to a linguistic poem. In this introduction the poet stresses the difficulty of the project and humbly pronounces himself unworthy to undertake it.⁵² By stressing the state of abandonment of Hebrew, his own command of the language becomes all the more admirable. The abandonment of the language is also an element he uses in constructing his own poetic heroism, since he portrays himself as a restorer of Hebrew in a quasi-prophetic

mission. Here, as in so many other matters, Ibn Gabirol is far ahead of his time, as the role of the poet as restorer of the Hebrew language would become most prominent in the thirteenth century.⁵³ Modeling himself after the prophet Jeremiah, he claims to have received in a dream a divine command to rescue the Hebrew language. Like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4ff), he claims to have tried to resist, only to undertake in the end a mission for which God had chosen him (verses 16ff). Finally, Ibn Gabirol models this introduction to the *'Anaq* after Sa'adia's introduction to his *Kitāb uṣūl al-shi'r al-ibrānī* (*Ha-Egron*)⁵⁴ ("The Hebrew Poetry Book of Roots"), the first complete and comprehensive Judeo-Arabic dictionary, and develops themes similar to those found in this text.⁵⁵ This is not to say that the situation Ibn Gabirol describes in his *'Anaq*, regarding the state of Hebrew, is or is not representative of the reality of Hebrew at the time. Nevertheless, this is irrelevant for the argument that I am making. What is important is how Ibn Gabirol uses language to build his heroic role in the poem and how he understands the relationship between Hebrew and Arabic in terms of servitude and as an inversion of the natural state of things mirroring his position vis-à-vis the poets of his generation. Needless to say, his is a didactic poem that follows Arabic models, rhetoric and metrical conventions. Ibn Gabirol provides us with a perfect example of how processes of individual identification follow strategies of collective projection. His heroic characterization as a quasi-prophetic poet battling unworthy adversaries is given collective overtones.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson asks to what extent social cohesions generated through language are real. He concludes that these solidarities can be built on an essentially imaginary basis. In other words, identification with a given language is not necessarily justified by an existing linguistic practice. Hence, Ibn Gabirol's description of the neglect of Hebrew does not inform us about the state of Hebrew among his contemporaries, but reveals much about the use of language as a strategy to construct a group's identity and to assert the superiority of the poet as an individual within a group of peers – the discourse on language is subordinated to the poet's self-praise.

Across the border: Moses ibn 'Ezra's and Judah Halevi's different(?) views of language

The arrival of the Almoravids on the Peninsula in 1086 resulted in the migration of the Jewish communities toward the North of the Peninsula. This displacement proved to be permanent after the Almohads took over the control of al-Andalus in 1147. As a result of the Jewish (and Christian) exodus, the cultural and linguistic boundaries were renegotiated. The status of Arabic, as well as that of Hebrew, would be brought to the foreground not just in the period that followed the North African invasions and during the subsequent process of adaptation to the new Christian setting, but over the course of the next three hundred years. With the transition across the border, the (to this point) almost nonexistent

reflection on and reaction toward Arabic gained momentum. This phenomenon has been explained as a result of the presence of Christians as an additional cultural Other and/or as an imitation of Christian polemical attitudes toward Islam. Discussion of the transition in political and cultural spaces is, first and foremost, linked to the name of the poet and philosopher Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ (ca. 1055–after 1135).

It has been long agreed that Moses ibn ‘Ezra’s treatise on poetics⁵⁶ – *Kitāb al-muḥādara wa-l-mudhākara* (“Book of Discussion and Conversation”) – is no more than a by-product of the new redistribution of the cultural map resulting from the displacement of the Jewish communities that took place in Almoravid times.⁵⁷ In this book Ibn ‘Ezra’ took issue with most aspects mentioned to this point regarding Arabic’s relationship to Hebrew. He strongly and explicitly supported comparison between Hebrew and its cognate languages and, as was customary, legitimized this practice by quoting precedents in the pre-Andalusi and Andalusi philological tradition, among them Dunash ibn Tamīm (ca. 890–after 956) and Isaac ibn Bārūn (ca. 1100).⁵⁸ Like his predecessor Judah ibn Quraysh (second half of the ninth century), he explains similarities between these languages as a result of proximity and closeness between speakers, without further theological connotations. In Ibn ‘Ezra’s view, the diaspora explains, first, the fact that Jews have been not only speaking but writing in other languages since biblical times. In order to legitimize the comparison he, as his predecessors, resorts to the authorities from the past, and, as was customary, not to Arabic, but to Aramaic, a biblical language. Following in Dunash’s and Ibn Janāḥ’s footsteps, the defense of Aramaic as a base of comparison with Hebrew, precedes that of Arabic. Thus he says:

Has it not be seen that Daniel, Ananias, Ezra and Nehemiah, may God’s peace be with them, wrote some of their texts in Chaldean.... Men of government, at the times of the monarchy, and those who were not of their religion, their nation and faith, spoke in it. The diaspora which left Babylonia spoke in Chaldean and Aramaic, as well as some of the tribes who left Samaria for Khurasan; a similar phenomenon took place in this exile.⁵⁹

Like his predecessors in the Andalusi and earlier periods, Ibn ‘Ezra’ also discusses the condition of decay of Hebrew in his time. He vaguely refers to the circumstances of the exile and very eloquently elaborates on this process of decay.

Since our kingdom was dismembered – he says – and our diaspora divided, we adopted nationalities and imitated the sects, we followed their ways and adopted their conduct, we became accustomed to their characters, spoke their languages and often adopted their lifestyles, as it is written: “They mingled with the nations and learned their ways”

(Psalms 106:35), and also “The holy seed has become intermingled with the peoples of the land” (Ezra 9:2), except in what regards the Law and religious precepts.⁶⁰

The preceding biblical quotations in Ibn ‘Ezra’s passage are often found in polemical contexts to condemn the interaction between the Jews and their neighbors. Ibn ‘Ezra’, however, uses both quotations in quite a different sense. Life among the nations, and the adoption of the nations’ ways, are not condemned or even disapproved. These are, rather, the circumstances that explain the cultural system in which Ibn ‘Ezra’ belongs and with which he identifies. The dispersion and dislocation of the Jewish communities in different countries, among different nations and time periods is what justifies the cultural model he represents and epitomizes.

In vivid contrast to the state of decay that he describes, Ibn ‘Ezra’ highlights, however, how superior Andalusi Jews were in respect to their Hebrew. His description of Hebrew parallels that of pre-Islamic Arabic. Thus, when Muslims think that the tribe of Quraysh spoke the purest form of Arabic,⁶¹ for Ibn ‘Ezra’, the Andalusi Jews were the most knowledgeable in the [Hebrew] language and in the transmission of the divine Law, as they originated in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee paralleled the Arabian Peninsula in providing the most favorable climate to write poetry.

This apparent paradox – the state of decay of Hebrew versus the excellence of the Hebrew spoken by Andalusian Jews – works in tandem with a second apparent contradiction. On the one hand, Ibn ‘Ezra’ denies the superiority of any given language over the rest, arguing that each language has its own grammar and vocabulary. On the other, he describes in great detail and praises exceedingly the superiority of the Arabs (both Ishmaelites and Qaḥṭānīs, that is from the North and the South of the Arabian Peninsula) in Arabic poetry, prose, and oratory.

This contradiction – avoiding a discussion on which language is superior, but acknowledging the superiority of Arabic oratory – is resolved when Ibn ‘Ezra’’s reservations are placed in a polemical context, which is clear in his appraisal of the dogma of the Qur’ān’s inimitability (*i‘jāz al-qur’ān*). The passage referring to this matter in his *Kitāb* is worth quoting at length:

This late community, namely Islam, turned to the inimitable eloquence of their Qur’ān, in proof of its truth, claiming that their own authorities in eloquence are not able to write anything similar. A refutation [of this dogma] is far beyond our concern, inasmuch as the head of the Academy, Samuel ben Ḥofni, in his work *Naskh al-shar‘ wa-uṣūl al-dīn wa-furu‘uhu* (“Abrogation of the Law and Foundations of Religion and its Branches”) and Daud al-Raqqī, known as al-Muqammaş, in his book *Al-Ma‘shar min maqāla* (“Twenty Chapters”), have already elaborated enough for those who might be interested, besides what is scat-

tered in many of Rabbi Sa‘adia’s works. Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī has already given a reply to this Qur‘ān with exceeding elegance and concision in his *al-Fuṣūl wa-l-ghāyāt* (“Chapters and Objectives”).⁶²

Ibn ‘Ezra’s previous fervent defense of the excellence of Arabic literature seems at odds with this claim, as it may seem obvious that the Arabs indeed had authorities whose eloquence reached the highest standards. However, he does not pursue any further refutation of the dogma, but limits himself to directing the reader to polemicists who have done so, calling upon the authority of Jewish, as well as Muslim authorities, most notably, the great Arab poet al-Ma‘arrī (973–1057). Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticism of the *i‘jāz al-qur‘ān*, with no precedents in the literature written by Jewish authors in al-Andalus, has been given the attention it deserves in recent scholarship. Nehemia Allony was the first to read this passage, like the *Kitāb* in its entirety, as a manifestation of the tension between ‘arabiyya and *shu‘ubiyya* – that is as endorsing the supremacy of Arabs and Arabic culture, or denying it – and many have followed in his footsteps.⁶³ Joseph Sadan, in turn, has called attention to the theological polemical background in which the passage was presumably written. Sadan claims that Ibn ‘Ezra’ makes use of a reservoir of arguments and methods against the dogma of the Qur‘ān’s inimitability, which Jews and Christians shared in the Hispanic kingdoms and in the East.⁶⁴ However, it seems to me that Ibn ‘Ezra’ does not try to undermine the inimitable character of the Qur‘ān’s language and style, as much as he tries to emphasize his strong opposition to the use of the inimitable character of the Qur‘ān as proof of the truth of Islam. This is nothing more than a self-justification if we consider his own use of the quranic text.

In Ibn ‘Ezra’s *Kitāb* the concepts of Self and Other are, then, re-defined and understood from a radically new perspective. While the explicit discourses on language by previous Andalusi authors concur in identifying language and nation, albeit to different degrees, and with different intent, in the *Kitāb*, the Arabic language does not constitute the Other but is part of the Self, versus an Other represented by the local knowledge of the Jewish and Christian communities Ibn ‘Ezra’ encountered in the North of the Peninsula. This incorporation of Arabic within the Self explains Ibn ‘Ezra’s ardent defense of the excellence of Arabic poetry and oratory. His adoption of Arabic language and literature is selective, however, and subject to certain filters. First, in the passage quoted above, he remarks that intermingling with the nations had indeed affected all aspects in life, *except* for what related to the “Law and religious precepts,” when it is evident that Jews, in the Andalusi and earlier periods, had been very much influenced by Muslim religious practices and tendencies.⁶⁵ Second, it is rather significant that Ibn ‘Ezra’ stresses the importance of pre-Islamic culture and highlights interactions between Arabs and Jews in the pre-Islamic context. He asserts that Jews used to go to the Arabian Peninsula to reach perfection in poetry; he argues that Samaw‘al ibn ‘Adiya and al-Rabī ibn Abī l-Huqayq, Arabian Jewish poets of the sixth century, might have indeed

been Bedouins who converted to Judaism. This emphasis on the connection between pre-Islamic Arabs and Jews is in complete accord with his previous remark and seems meant to avoid any suspicion of religious influence from Islam into Judaism, clearly separating Law from literature.⁶⁶ Third, he also shows his opposition to some disciplines prone to greater opposition among the audience he is addressing.⁶⁷ In sum, in terms of language-related matters, Ibn ‘Ezra’ also projects an imagined Arab community, which the Self either mirrors or incorporates; this community poses no threat to Jewish identity.

Ibn ‘Ezra’s position on the Arabic language stands in striking contrast to that held by one of the most celebrated poets and philosophers among his contemporaries, Judah Halevi (ca. 1070–1141).⁶⁸ In his *Kitāb al-Khazārī* (*Kuzari*/“Book of the Khazars”), Halevi makes the king of the Khazars debate with a philosopher and three scholars – a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew – to be finally convinced by the latter’s arguments and convert to Judaism. As the debate proceeds, Halevi raises questions relating to language and emphasizes the absolute superiority of Hebrew, the language in which God spoke to Adam and Eve, the language that remained in the line of ‘Ever when languages split, the one spoken by Abraham and by Moses, in spite of the “false statements concerning the origin, history, and languages of well-known nations, the latter being less than five hundred years old.”⁶⁹ In doing so Halevi takes one step further, and radicalizes, positions that had been unheard of since the times of Menahem ben Saruq, with the exception of Ibn Gabirol’s *Anaq*.

While his predecessors had stressed the present state of decay of Hebrew, and most of them had acknowledged the, at least, temporary superiority of Arabic over Hebrew, Halevi emphasized the original richness of Hebrew. Hebrew was the language of prophecy, used in public speeches, prayer, songs and Psalms. For Halevi, the metaphor that identifies Jewish people with the Hebrew language is crucial. Unlike most of his predecessors and contemporaries, Halevi supports the divine origin of Hebrew. Henceforth, he describes it as “the remnant of our language that was created and instituted by God.”⁷⁰

To summarize, in his *Kitāb*, Moses Ibn ‘Ezra’ incorporated Arabic into the community in which he included himself. As for Judah Halevi, it is obvious that he was overtly conscious of the process of adoption of Arabic by Andalusi Jews, and that he himself excelled in the Arabic language. However, unlike Ibn ‘Ezra’, he did not accept Arabic as a valid parameter to construct and express the identity of his own imagined community, and instead rejected it.

This rift is equally manifest in Halevi’s discussion of the dogma of the Qur’ān’s inimitability, which, according to the Khazar king, a main character in his *Kuzari*, is the only principle to set Islam apart from Judaism. Again, his position and that of Ibn ‘Ezra’, who prevented his audience from thinking that the use of the quranic quotations would result in the recognition of the truth of Islam, are close. The *Kuzari*’s rabbi disregards the dogma, arguing that, even granting the miraculous character of the book, this dogma would be limited to Muslims, as members of other faiths with no access to Arabic would never be

able to appreciate it.⁷¹ Once more, Halevi aims at creating a categorical division across religious lines, and in order to do so he negates his immediate experience. As was clear in Ibn ‘Ezra’s *Kitāb*, contemporary Sephardic Jews master Arabic prosody and poetics – Halevi himself does – and are familiar with and quote the Qur’ān. As was the case with Ibn Gabirol’s *‘Anaq*, Halevi creates a fictitious solidarity as a model for identity as he identifies religious community and linguistic community. By the same token, and in answer to the Khazar’s attempt to apply similar criteria to the Bible, which might force an acceptance of its imperfect character, Halevi remarks that “Moses invited only his people and those of his own tongue to accept his law,”⁷² in contrast to the statement made by the Muslim scholar in his conversation with the Khazar king: “Our prophet [...] invited all nations to embrace Islam.”⁷³

Interestingly, Halevi defends the excellence of the Mishnah in terms that bring to mind the dogma of *i‘jāz al-qur’ān*, as he remarks, “mortal man is incapable of composing such a work without divine assistance.”⁷⁴ While Ibn ‘Ezra takes the Qur’ān’s contents as a source of knowledge and wisdom valuable across religious communities, but refuses to understand quranic style as a proof of prophecy, Halevi takes the opposite attitude: he does not deny the power of the Qur’ān as proof of prophecy within the Islamic community; he also builds in identical terms the inspired character of the Mishnaic language. Halevi, then, represents an author for whom language and knowledge, on the one hand, and the discourse on language and knowledge on the other, are simply worlds apart.

Across the border: translations and translation-related literature

A different, yet very much related, movement across the “border,” that began by the mid-eleventh century and continued in full force until at least the early fourteenth century, must be considered when examining attitudes toward language. This involved the translation of more than one thousand titles from Arabic into Hebrew, in answer to an increasing demand by a public who either had not been Arabized, or was becoming progressively unfamiliar with Arabic. Over this long period of time, Arabic and Hebrew coexisted, at least in certain circles. Toledo Mozarabs retained an Arabized cultural identity far beyond the Christian conquest of Toledo in 1085.⁷⁵ Muslims (called Mudejars in the Hispanic kingdoms), whose presence had dramatically diminished, continued to speak Arabic in rural areas. As for Jews, Arabic was also to be maintained among groups of professionals or physicians, especially in Castile.⁷⁶ Jewish physicians, in fact, continued using and consulting books of medicine in Arabic, even after the Expulsion from the Peninsula in 1492.⁷⁷

It is by now an established fact that translation, far from being a monolithic process of knowledge transmission, is a rather selective process that has to be justified and legitimated.⁷⁸ Reactions toward the Arabic language in translation-related literature written in the period under analysis are primarily found in

letters exchanged between a scholar and individuals or communities requesting the translation of one of his works, and in prefaces written by translators. Paramount within the first category, are some statements found in letters sent by one of the foremost scholars of his day, Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) regarding his choice of either Arabic or Hebrew in his works.⁷⁹ Born in Cordova in 1138, Maimonides left al-Andalus at an early age and, after a brief period in the Maghrib, headed to Egypt where he spent most of his life. While, unlike other authors to whom I will refer in this section, he did not write in Christian Iberia or Provence, his perspective on language and his reactions toward Arabic are in some ways a by-product of the Jewish displacement into Christian Iberia and Provence, inasmuch as his works were translated for those living in those areas.

Maimonides' letters provide evidence that he regarded language merely as an instrument for communication and accorded the content of a given text more important than the language in which the text was written. At the same time, however, he also highlighted the beauty of Hebrew, superior to that of any other language. This ambivalence becomes apparent, for example, in a letter he sent to Ibn Gabir, a Jewish scholar established in Baghdad, who had requested a translation of his legal code, the *Mishneh Torah*, into Arabic. In this letter Maimonides remarked that while it was irrelevant that a given topic were written in Hebrew, Arabic, or Aramaic, he would not translate this text – the *Mishneh Torah* – into Arabic, as doing so would destroy its beauty.⁸⁰

The identification that Maimonides established between Hebrew and the idea of beauty allowed him to explain the concept of Hebrew as a sacred language, a status that Jewish scholars had taken for granted since the times of the rabbis. In his philosophical *magnum opus*, *Dalālat al-ḥā’irīn* (*Moreh Nevukhim*/“Guide of the Perplexed”), for example, he asserted that Hebrew does not have a specific terminology either to refer to sexual organs or sexual relationships, or to express bodily functions such as urination, these functions have been described only in a figurative sense.⁸¹

Maimonides' ambivalent regard of Arabic versus Hebrew is revealed in several letters that he sent to the Jewish communities established in Christian lands. This is the case in the letter he sent to the sages of Lunel, where he writes with regard to his *Dalālat al-ḥā’irīn*, written in Arabic: “I wish I were younger to comply with your request [to translate] this book, and others that I wrote in the language of Qedar, because my sun became dark in inhabiting its tents. I would be delighted to rescue the despised treasure, and return to its owners what was stolen, but the circumstances of fate have overcome me.”⁸² A similar attitude, also tainted with regret, pervades his letter to R. Efraim of Tyre, a scholar from French origin who settled in Palestine, where he wrote, regarding his *Mishneh Torah*: “I have greatly regretted to have written it in Arabic, as all were in need of its reading. Now, with God’s help, I hope I will be able to translate it to Hebrew.”⁸³

This negative attitude toward Arabic is somehow nuanced, however, in a letter addressed to the Provençal scholar of Andalusi origin Samuel ibn Tibbon

(ca. 1160–1230). In this letter Maimonides wrote: “I was surprised that someone born among stutterers could become so interested in wisdom, and be so fluent in Arabic, which is merely somehow corrupted Hebrew.”⁸⁴ Two comments are in order regarding this statement. First, Maimonides uses stuttering – a speech defect – as a tool to construct cultural otherness, a common means of making exclusions or distinguishing the Self from the Other.⁸⁵ Second, although this statement, taken out of context, is customarily used as proof of Maimonides’ dismissal of Arabic, by the same token he considers Ibn Tibbon his peer, and shows his appreciation of the latter’s command of Arabic (versus those who stutter). In fact, Maimonides, who spent most of his life in Egypt, describes the intellectual community with which he identifies himself as “our place in al-Andalus” or “our place in the Maghrib.”⁸⁶ His characterization of Arabic as “somehow corrupted Hebrew” is both positive and negative. Arabic is diminished when compared to Hebrew, but it is also credited on the basis of its similarity to Hebrew, the sacred language, and according to his praise of Ibn Tibbon’s command of the language. It seems that the linguistic Other is either Latin or Romance.⁸⁷

Maimonides’ awareness of language use and his reactions toward Arabic, primarily but not exclusively found in his letters, find a natural niche in prefaces to translations from Arabic into Hebrew, where the trauma of transitioning from one cultural space to another is exposed. Prefaces to translations create the channels by which the contents of the source culture may be incorporated into the target culture, showing that both are part of one and the same *ethos*. Translators are forced, by definition, to redefine the Self. Different reactions emerge over time.⁸⁸

One position, held in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when Andalusi culture was at its azimuth, perceives the disadvantaged position of Hebrew in relation to Arabic, a perception found in Maimonides letters. For example, in the preface to his translation of the work of the eleventh-century philologist Judah Ḥayyūj, Moses ibn Chiquitilla (eleventh century), was confronted with the paradox of having to translate the work of a major Jewish intellectual whose role had been crucial for the scientific study of the Hebrew language, yet who had written his books in Arabic. He solves the contradiction by resorting to the *topos* of exile and diaspora among the nations to explain Ḥayyūj’s recourse to Arabic. In so doing, Ibn Chiquitilla recreates the duality language/nation as a means to construct identity.

A foreign people (*‘am lo‘ez*) – he asserts – took precedence over us, and peoples of deep languages (*‘amqe safā*) and heavy speech (*kavde lashon*) swallowed us.... The sacred language was sunken among secular languages, whose speakers grew as sand, so that only a remnant of us remained and the wisdom of our sages was lost.... This is the reason why those who wrote books on the sacred language ... began to write in Arabic, as this language was triumphant within a powerful

community and was easy to understand. While Hebrew was dark, Arabic was open and explicit.⁸⁹

Ibn Chiquitilla writes for an audience who does not know Arabic and would find it bizarre for biblical commentaries or responsa to have been written in Arabic. Similarly, Judah ibn Tibbon's (ca. 1120–ca. 1190) introduction to his translation of *Kitāb al-hidāya ilā farā'id al-qulūb* (*Sefer hovot ha-levavot*/"Book of the Duties of the Hearts") by Bahya ibn Paqudah notes that the communities of Israel who lived in exile in the kingdom of Ishmael, in Babylonia, in Israel, and in Persia wrote biblical and rabbinic commentaries, as well as most other texts, including responsa, in Arabic. The reason was that the Jewish people knew Arabic and that Arabic "was more comprehensive and complete in any given field, according to the needs of every speaker and every writer. Its 'rhetorical eloquence' (*meliṣah*) was precise, it was fixed and reached the goal of any given subject much better than what could be accomplished in Hebrew, for Hebrew was not in our possession except for what was included in the biblical books."⁹⁰ For the sake of dissemination of knowledge, books, both in the study of the Torah and in other fields, were therefore written in Arabic. The reasons Ibn Tibbon provides are of a practical kind. His appreciation of Arabic is clear when he wrote:

Arabic is an extensive and bright language, meant for knowledge of any given subject according to its desire and heart, whereas of Hebrew, as we have seen, we do not possess [enough] to satisfy the needs of all our matters.⁹¹

Ibn Tibbon's position is also meant as a rebuttal of contemporary opposition, coming from more conservative sectors, an opposition that Ibn Tibbon himself exposes with a statement that parallels that of his predecessor Jonah ibn Janāḥ, quoted above: "The habit of many people these days is to harass and attack whomever among their contemporaries, introduces innovations either in translating, writing, versifying, or related matters."⁹²

It is precisely in his introduction to Jonah ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-luma'* (*Sefer ha-Riqmah*/"The Book of Variegated Flower-Beds") that Ibn Tibbon eloquently elaborates on the cognitive metaphor that identifies the Hebrew language and the Jewish people in exile. By the same token, he uses military weapons to identify his role, and by extension, the role of translators, with warriors who save the language/people and provide for their return home:

God awoke the spirit of their warriors, princes of Israel's armies. These are the ones who fortified its walls, fixed its borders, paved its paths, established its foundations, built its house, carved its columns, repaired its breaches, collected its diasporas and made the dispersed come back to their homeland, made families return to their parents' house.⁹³

In addition to the two metaphors involved in this paragraph – Hebrew as the Jewish people and translators as warriors – a third one is in place – that of translation as redemption. The process of translation is ultimately legitimated as a metaphorical sacred-military enterprise. It is not only translators whom Ibn Tibbon describes with military metaphors, but Sephardic grammarians as well. Thereby, Ḥayyūj becomes “hero of the army and warrior” who fought against difficult grammatical forms and won. Samuel ha-Nagid and Jonah ibn Janāḥ, who followed in his footsteps, are “princes of the army of wisdom” whom God “illuminated with His light so that they might become strong heroes, obedient to His bidding (Psalms 103:20), who equipped the army to bring its secret into the open and stood girded for combat, line against line.”⁹⁴ As had happened with Ibn Gabirol’s *Anaq*, the translator projects his individual identity onto a collective self, thereby strengthening the identification between language and nation.

New(?) developments in the thirteenth century

The awareness of the use of Hebrew, found in works relating to translation from Arabic into Hebrew would become prominent in the thirteenth century, a time in which Hebrew experienced an unprecedented process of revitalization. Metaphors describing language use and language change multiplied endlessly. They are particularly evident in introductions to translations written in this period, as well as in works of rhymed prose, such as those written by Judah al-Harizi (1165–1225) and Jacob ben El’azar (twelfth–thirteenth centuries). Both authors, well known for their works of fictional prose, radicalize the attitude toward Arabic that had emerged in twelfth-century translations from Arabic into Hebrew. In his *Tahkemoni*, a popular *maqāmāt* collection, al-Harizi describes Hebrew as surpassing any other language and portrays it as a bride dressed for her wedding who is abused by Hebrew speakers.

In ancient times Hebrew was a golden plough, but in our day villains
flay her with brazen brow: righteousness lodged in her, but murderers
now. She is banished from her children, none mourn her loss, her silver
turns dross.⁹⁵

Al-Ḥarizi’s Hebrew is metaphorically identified with a particular representation of Israel: that of a noble woman, who while destined from birth to be served, has been vilified and harassed. Hebrew, personified, describes herself as follows: “I am an orphan … though my Father flourishes; yet my hope perishes, for my mother’s sons, my brothers, have reviled me – I, who wore a royal crown; they have defiled me.”⁹⁶ In addition to the Song of Songs, whence the imagery of the deserted bride comes, other biblical passages are central in al-Harizi’s presentation of the language. In the following texts three of them intertwined: the passage describing how Joseph is sold to the Ishmaelites in Genesis 37, the idea of the alien women (*ishah zarah*) from Proverbs, and the passage concerning Hagar in Genesis 16.

I was the Queen in God's holy court ... And now your children race to kiss a stranger's face. They shun my delights, saying, "Come, let's sell her to the Ishmaelites! She is unfit!" Thereat they seized me and flung me into a pit, they all but doomed me, moaning – the hypocrites! – that an evil beast had consumed me! They set Hagar the maidservant in my place and rushed to her embrace, kissing her hand and pressing her teat – for stolen waters are sweet. Me, they abandoned, the Rose of Sharon, saying, Hagar is fecund and Sarah barren.⁹⁷

This feminization of the language is powerfully evocative and very effective in conveying several interrelated ideas – honor, communal identity, loss and restoration. The Arabic language, also personified, becomes an Other characterized as cruel and oppressive, but most prominently by its powerful and dangerous seduction. This striking contrast between Arabs/Muslims and Jews as competing women was a pattern in liturgical poetry since the earliest *Piyyut*, but had not been called upon to convey the relationship between both languages until now, or at least, not as strongly. As was the case with Moses ibn 'Ezra' and Judah Halevi, the paradox that has been often noted is that this blatant attack on Arabic arose at a time when the confrontation and coexistence between Arabic and Hebrew in the Peninsula had ceased. This is an interesting observation because, as I mentioned above, the construction of the Other can be made – or better, it is usually made – on a fictitious/imaginary basis. That this attack takes place outside al-Andalus has also been noted, as well as the possible influence of Christian polemical arguments.⁹⁸

It is on this final point that I would like to reflect regarding al-Harizi's paragraph just quoted. One wonders to what extent this preoccupation with the status of Hebrew versus Arabic that surfaces strongly in the thirteenth century is not a reflection of similar Christian polemical positions on Arabic, but rather mirrors Christian polemical positions toward the Jews, that would have been internalized and applied to the description of the Hebrew language vis-à-vis Arabic. One must take into consideration that, while in medieval Jewish exegesis Sarah is a type for Judaism and Hagar a symbol of Islam, Christian commentators take Hagar, the despised maidservant, as a type for the Jews, while Sarah, the legitimate wife, signifies the Church. Along the same lines, the following passage from the *Taḥkemoni* casts some light on this matter. Al-Harizi says:

Our Holy Tongue, Beauty's very mother, is turned Cain's brother. Vulgarity supplants clarity; homeliness, comeliness; tarnish, varnish.... Alas our language: our folk have slandered and defaced her, all but erased her, saying: "Hebrew is lean and lacking, so much faded sacking"; but they are too obtuse to realize that they are blind to her use, too dense to know that theirs is the offence – like a man with a great sty in his eye who, unable to see the sky, holds sunlight night.⁹⁹

Cain represented a general symbol for monstrosity for Christians, but in medieval Christian art, exegesis, and literature the symbol was applied particularly to Jews. The Church Fathers, as well as later medieval Christian commentators, perceived Cain as a prefiguration of the Jewish people. Drawing on these texts, artists creating stained glass windows and miniature paintings in manuscripts juxtaposed images from the life of Cain with images of contemporary Jews, suggesting a typological reading.¹⁰⁰ The stress on the loss of status and favor seems also in accordance with Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism when compared to Christians. Further confirmation of al-Ḥarizi's adoption and internalization of Christian exegetical views on contemporary Jews is the self-portrait included in the introductory poem to the *Taḥkemoni*, where he describes himself as "He who lived in the Garden of God," an expression taken from the dirge for the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:13, a passage interpreted by Christians as a type for Jews.¹⁰¹

Al-Ḥarizi does not describe the status of Hebrew and its contemporary state of decay as the inevitable result of the Jews living among other nations, but rather as the result of an intentional attack by its own speakers, which seems to corroborate the influence of a polemical context. Arabic is made to play alternately the roles of the oppressor and the seducer. Interestingly, al-Ḥarizi denounces the seduction of Arabic in the harshest terms, even though he himself was clearly seduced. He wrote:

Golden Poesy was the Arabs' legacy.... Through every land and clime
rears singers swift to climb the golden rungs of rhythm and of rhyme –
all they compose, compared with Arab song, is prose. For the clearest
chime Time's bells have rung, the boldest songs that ever lips have
sung, have spilled from the Arab's tongue. The Arabs are dawn's blinding,
puissant sun: before them are the nations all undone. Yet our
fathers, émigrés in Exile's winding maze, reached Arab lands and
bathed in their sun's strong rays, yes, learned their speech, thought,
song, became their protégés, even as Scripture states: "They mingled
with the nations and learned their ways". (Psalms 106:35)¹⁰²

Al-Ḥarizi, nevertheless, following in the footsteps of Moses ibn 'Ezra', establishes the filters that may guarantee the superiority of Hebrew. What distinguishes Arabic from Hebrew, in his opinion, is the sacred character of the latter, which was chosen by God on the grounds of its perfection.

One more observation is in order regarding al-Ḥarizi's discourse on Hebrew and Arabic in the *Taḥkemoni*. The recent discovery of an Arabic biography of al-Ḥarizi, included in a biographical dictionary by al-Ḥarizi's contemporary the Eastern scholar al-Mubārak ibn al-Sha'ar al-Mawṣilī, has revealed that he wrote the *Taḥkemoni*, at least partly, in the East.¹⁰³ Furthermore, during the years he spent in the East (1215–25), al-Ḥarizi also wrote Arabic poems in Arabic characters for Muslim patrons, a most unusual occur-

rence. Of course, one has to consider that he spent most of his life in Christian territory and that linguistic practice and discourse on language do not necessarily match.

Both al-Harizi's description of Arabic language and his ardent defense of Arabic poetry are reminiscent of Moses ibn 'Ezra'. Both al-Harizi and Ibn 'Ezra' use identical strategies to legitimize their cultural models and understand the scattering among the nations in a positive light. Likewise, they both establish filters for the incorporation of Arabic poetry. The time lapse between them, however, left an imprint in their respective attitudes toward language. While Ibn 'Ezra' does not deny the fact that, exceptionally, poems conceived in a dream may be prophetic,¹⁰⁴ al-Harizi stresses the prophetic character of Hebrew (a quality that Moses ibn 'Ezra' and especially Halevi had already observed), and claims that the Andalusi poetic schools have come to an end, along with the poetic/prophetic spirit. This is why he can present himself as their heir, invested with a prophetic role that God himself has bestowed upon him, as he describes in the *Tahkemoni*'s introduction.

In the introduction to his *Sefer ha-meshalim* ("Book of Parables"), also a rhymed prose work, Jacob ben El'azar, similarly claims that Hebrew is a sacred language, chosen by God, suitable to express any matter or experience, but, unlike al-Harizi, he claims to feel nothing but contempt for Arabic. Ben El'azar acknowledges, in fact, that he is writing his book as a response "to the group of sages of the Ishmaelites,¹⁰⁵ who have made the sacred language feel frightened; they have grown arrogant and have boasted petulantly, saying: "'Is there any other language to praise or scorn/or to incite love, as the language of the Arabs?/[It is suitable] for wars and this time's struggles./Where are there words as sweet as ours?' They derided the Jews with presumption./They mocked them/and seduced my people with their tongues/they led it astray with their lies/to the extent that [some of them] said: 'Ishmaelites say that all languages approximate theirs, to become softer/as there are no words more pleasant/than those of the Arabs' language.'"¹⁰⁶

In this passage Ben El'azar defends Hebrew from real or fictitious attackers. He does not only counter the opinion of a certain "group of the Ishmaelites" but blames those among the Jews who seem to be convinced by the claims of the Arabic language's superiority and beauty. In fact, some of Ben El'azar's words bring to mind al-Harizi's or Ibn 'Ezra's description of Arabic.

In addition to works written in Hebrew, translations continued to be a key component in the thirteenth-century intellectual map. As before, translations emphasized the interest in the contents of the book, and the value of those contents to fortify Judaism. In terms of language, thirteenth-century translation displays a more adversarial attitude toward Arabic consistent with the views of al-Harizi and Ben El'azar. While eleventh- and twelfth-century translators acknowledged the superiority of Arabic and the inability of Hebrew for conveying most topics, thirteenth-century translators, Judah al-Harizi among them, adopted a different strategy. Translations were perceived as returning wisdom to

its original vessel becomes a commonplace. Descriptions of the radical, irreconcilable opposition between Arabic and Hebrew generalized. The dark, secular/profane and evil character of Arabic was contrasted to the brightness, sacredness and goodness of Hebrew.

Al-Harizi, who, in addition to writing prose fiction, was a prolific translator, wrote in the introduction to his translation of order *Zera‘im*, in Maimonides’ *Commentary on the Mishnah*: “I applied myself to get the sacred texts out of the foreign language, so that [escaping their] prison, they could reign.”¹⁰⁷

A similar disregard for Arabic is also apparent in the story reported by Joseph ben al-Puel, found in the introduction to his translation of order *Mo‘ed*, also in Maimonides’ *Commentary on the Mishnah*. According to Ben al-Puel, after being exposed to Al-Harizi’s translation of order *Zera‘im*, the rabbis of Rome sent one Rabbi Simha to the Peninsula, in search of the remaining orders. This Rabbi Simha met with the prominent scholar and communal leader Solomon ibn Adret (d. 1310) in Barcelona, an area that had been barely Arabized, the latter confessed the books were not in Barcelona as: “We never used to study the language of Hagar, and [this] has never slandered our language (Psalms 15:3), for the sacred tongue has spread out its pavilion over the most beautiful land, so that no Arab shall pitch his tent there. Since the days of our holy fathers we have not had it as inheritance as no one would exchange good for evil, sacred for profane.”¹⁰⁸

As for books written by Muslim authors, translators emphasized, first, the value of the content. Al-Harizi, who translated the *Kitāb ādāb al-falāsifa* (*Sefer musere ha-filosofim*/“Book of the Philosophers’ Dicta”) by Hunayn ibn Ishāq, stated: “How wonderful it is to reunite two goods [the sayings of the Greek philosophers with the Hebrew language] and bring sweet presents to those who know them and pearls to those who recognize their value and price.”¹⁰⁹

In addition to introductions to works of *belles lettres* or translations, attitudes toward language continued to appear occasionally during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in polemical statements scattered in works of different genres, such as those written by Kabbalists on the nature and combination of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet or late philological or polemical treatises. These exhibit an equally belligerent attitude toward Arabic.¹¹⁰

It is likely that these statements about Arabic go hand in hand with the revival of polemics against Islam and Muslims during this period.¹¹¹ Islam, although receding, was still part of the inter-confessional map of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Aragonese cities. In this respect it is worth noticing that conversion from Judaism to Islam, far from rare, was significant enough to become a concern in Christian legislation.¹¹² To the list of treatises written by Jewish authors against Islam, we must add those written by Jewish converts against their former coreligionists. In one such treatise, *Ta‘yid al-Milla* (“The Fortification of Faith”), written in fourteenth-century Aragon,¹¹³ the anonymous author reports having witnessed groups of Jews gathering and letting loose their tongues with calumnies about the prophet Muḥammad. Elsewhere I have argued

that the author's emphasis on the Hagar episode in Genesis is indeed a result of the Christian context in which this text is written. In this context Hagar was understood as a type for Judaism.¹¹⁴ Even in the first part of the fifteenth century, one Mattityahu ben Moshe, in his composition in defense of Judaism, *Aḥiqūv we-Šalmon*, discusses the relationship between the three religions.¹¹⁵ In addition to the polemical reaction against Islam, the daily contact between members of both minorities, Judaism and Islam, had also generated the need to oppose Islam and Muslims in ethical and legal sources.

This cultural map vividly contrasts to that of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mozarabs. Francisco J. Hernández, who has studied Mozarabs' Arabization in this period, argues that, once the transmission of property from legal documents written in Arabic into Latin/Romance documents was guaranteed, Mozarabs were willing to forget Arabic, a sign of separation from other Christians. By the mid-fourteenth century they began to change their names, the only remaining link with their past being their membership in a Mozarabic parish. Linguistic pluralism, far from being a cultural value worth praising, was an evil sign, in the words of the thirteenth-century Christian chronicler Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada.¹¹⁶

The discourse on language is one of the primary strategies a group uses to build its own identity. Language provides basic metaphorical mappings and strong dichotomies to oppose the idea of the Self to that of the Other. Typically, the opposition of language A versus language B works in conjunction with a second opposition between speakers of language A versus speakers of language B. Hence, identification between language A and its speakers versus language B and its speakers comes almost as a given. In this regard, most classical cultures conceived of the Other as a barbarian, that whose language was by definition incomprehensible. In these cultures conflict with the Other was first and foremost a conflict of languages. Nonetheless, minorities living amid a host society, who adopted the language prevalent in that society, developed much more nuanced attitudes toward a language they not only knew, but claimed to master, and toward speakers of that language, among whom they lived. Medieval Iberia provides a particularly interesting case study in this regard, as two factors made the attitude of Jewish authors toward Arabic particularly complex. First, the fact that a significant and highly Arabized Christian minority lived alongside Jews and Muslims in al-Andalus is to be taken into consideration. Second, beginning in 1086, with the arrival of the Almoravids to the Peninsula, the exodus of the Jewish population toward the Hispanic Christian kingdoms brought about a new set of conditions within which the attitudes toward Arabic continued to develop: regarding languages, the dominant majority language became Latin and Romance; as for speakers, a significant Muslim minority continued to live side by side with the Jewish minority under Christian rule. The fact that the most adversarial attitudes toward Arabic took place precisely in this Christian context is certainly noteworthy.

The discourse on language is recurrently found in introductions to grammatical and lexicographical works, introductions to translations from Arabic into Hebrew, or translation related literature and works written as a result of the transition from the Arabo-Muslim to the Christian cultural spaces. Beginning in the thirteenth century, reactions toward language are also found in polemical works,¹¹⁷ and occasionally kabbalistic works dealing with the nature and character of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This production, however, remains far beyond the chronological framework of this study.

As time went by, the attitude toward the majority language evolved. In the tenth century, attitudes toward Arabic vis-à-vis Hebrew are primarily found in the grammatical dispute that began with Menahem ben Saruq and Dunash ben Labrat, echoes of which resonate in the early eleventh century. All parts in the dispute identify Hebrew with the Self; however, Dunash and his supporters downplay the otherness of Arabic. In order to exclude their opponent, the students of both Menahem and Dunash identify that opponent with a religious Other. As othering is usually built upon religious categories (based on the opposition between purity and impurity) it is easy to understand why Christians rather than Muslims are seen as the quintessential Other. The use of a religious Other to make inclusions and exclusions within a large religious community was common currency in the Middle Ages. Thus, statements like “the Qadarites are the Zoroastrians of our community” or “the Shiites are the Jews of our community” are commonly found in Islamic sources.¹¹⁸ Similarly, heretics were often labeled as Jews in al-Andalus.¹¹⁹ What is striking in the case presented here is the fact that religious categories (opposition between Judaism and Christianity) are imported to define linguistic categories (opposition between Hebrew and Arabic).

As for the eleventh century, with the exception of Ibn Gabirol's *'Anaq* and a few scattered remarks in Ibn Janāḥ's works, explicit reactions toward Arabic are remarkably absent. Ibn Gabirol's *'Anaq*, in fact, offers an outstanding example of the way in which the individual identification of the poet versus his poetic competitors follows strategies of collective projection, that is, Ibn Gabirol portrays the competition between himself and contemporary (Jewish) poets in terms of an opposition of Jews versus Muslims (and Christians). A similar process of projection of the individual onto community would take place in al-Ḥarizi's self portrayal in the *Taḥkemoni*, and also in some introductions to translations from Arabic into Hebrew, where the translator becomes the champion of the despised language.

The transition of cultural spaces that takes place upon the arrival of the Almoravids to the Peninsula compels Moses ibn 'Ezra' to theorize a concept of the Self which incorporates the Arabic language and its literary models, echoes of which are still present in al-Ḥarizi's *Taḥkemoni*. Ibn 'Ezra' stresses the importance of Arabic as an instrument in creating the identity of the community he identifies with, that of Andalusi Jews who speak both in Arabic and in Hebrew. His nearly contemporary Judah Halevi, by contrast, rejects Arabic as a

parameter in building the community's identity. Both Ibn 'Ezra' and Halevi, to the same extent portray "imaginary communities." The former reduces the otherness of Arabo-Islamic models by anchoring them into a pre-Islamic past and by countering the *i'jāz al-qur'ān*'s dogma. The latter forces religious categories (Jews versus Muslims) upon linguistic categories (Hebrew versus Arabic) while he himself, like Ibn 'Ezra', excelled in both Arabic and Hebrew.

Beginning in the eleventh century, translation from Arabic into Hebrew entailed a constant confrontation between the two languages, as well as a constant redefinition of the Self based on language. In the work of thirteenth-century authors, such as al-Harizi and Ben El'azar, Arabic simultaneously played the role of oppressor and seducer, both categories most likely related to a religious-polemical context. Once again, religious categories are imported to create a sense of linguistic community. The progressive emphasis on the typological identification between Arabic and Hebrew with Hagar and Sarah respectively, that takes place in al-Harizi's time, and specifically in his *Tahkemoni*, comes, partially, as the result of having internalized the representation of Jews in Christian exegesis and having applied it, in turn, to the relationship between Hebrew and Arabic. The ways in which Christian authors describe Jews influenced the Jewish authors' self-perception, and provided the terms used to describe the attitude toward the Arabic language and, by extension, toward Muslims and Islam.¹²⁰

While the Jewish authors under consideration in this chapter spoke and often wrote in Arabic and in Hebrew, the great majority of them defined the community with which they identified by association with Hebrew and not with Arabic. Those exceptional authors who incorporated Arabic within the community they imagined and with which they identified, such as Moses ibn 'Ezra', were very careful to divest the Arabic language of all possible religious content, so that embracing Arabic would not be understood as a validation of Islam.

TRANSMITTING AND PRODUCING KNOWLEDGE

Jewish and Muslim intellectuals

Some aspects related to the representation of language and the construction of Self and Other on the basis of language overlap with religious polemics, inasmuch as religious categories and biblical types are brought into the description of language, and also due to the fact that issues such as language origin and the idea of the most beautiful language are an object of contention in the inter-confessional debate.

Likewise, language could in fact be considered a subcategory within the matters to be examined in the present chapter, which is concerned with the representation of the intellectual class and the explicit reaction toward disciplines, or literary forms and techniques perceived as imported from the Arabo-Islamic milieu. Not arbitrarily, Judah ibn Tibbon said in the preface to his translation of Jonah ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-Luma'* (*Sefer ha-Riqmah*): "Knowledge of the Hebrew language precedes any other discipline ... language is not the first in the number of fundamental [sciences], yet it is essential and goes first in the order of studies."¹

The tenth century: Arabic metrics, the study of grammar and the criteria of cultural excellence

The tenth-century discourse on language went hand in hand with two related matters, almost indissoluble bound to language – resistance to the incorporation of Arabic metrics into Hebrew and opposition to comparative grammatical study. The adaptation of the Arabic metrical system into Hebrew originated in al-Andalus, where the first attempts to write Hebrew poetry following Arabic poetic models were made.² Opposition to the study of grammar and lexicography, however, had precedents in the pre-Andalusi period. In the ninth century, Sa'adia's Hebrew dictionary, *Ha-Egron* had already aroused considerable opposition. Rabbanite biblical commentaries as well as those of the Karaites echo similar complaints against grammatical studies. In his study of medieval Jewish attitudes toward Hebrew, Halkin brings to bear the comments of the tenth-century Karaite Salmon ben Yeruhīm and the Rabbanite Gaon, Samuel ben Hofni (d. 1034). Commenting on Lamentations 1:8 the former

denounces the amounts spent by his fellow Jews in learning the Arabic language and its grammar.³ In interpreting Nehemiah 13:24, a verse that indicates that intermarriage with Ammonite and Moabite women was causing the Jews to forget their own language, the latter wrote: “This is the history of most of our contemporaries, who have abandoned their language and do not know it, but occupy themselves with the grammar books of the Gentiles.”⁴ Both exegetes present grammar as a foreign, gentile discipline, implying a consequential neglect of Hebrew. Indeed, this was a remarkable position as Arabic grammar, ironically, was imported as part of a project to revive the use of Hebrew.

In Iberia, Menahem ben Saruq’s disciples’ *Teshuvot* exhibit a similar disregard for comparative grammar, in addition to disapproval of Arabic metrics. However, other than this vague resistance to the incorporation of Arabic meters, and the sporadic mistrust toward the study of grammar among those who sided with Menahem ben Saruq, the general lack of reaction in the tenth century toward cultural models or literary forms imported from Arabic is nothing short of remarkable.

This attitude has been often contrasted with the open rebuttal of Arabo-Islamic culture found in a Mozarabic text written one century earlier (854) by Alvarus of Cordova – the *Indiculus Luminosus*. Focused on defending the ninth-century Christian martyrs or Cordova⁵ and issuing a polemical grumble against Islam, the book ends quite abruptly and atypically with a description of contemporary Christian cultural life. In the final passage, Alvarus, like Menahem’s disciples, shows his distaste for Arabic poetry, and remarks how much easier it would be to find among his contemporary Mozarabs someone who had mastered Arabic metrics than someone who could compose an ordinary letter in Latin.⁶ Alvarus’ criticism in this passage goes much further. He strongly condemns the ease with which his contemporaries enjoy the poems and romances of the Arabs, how they study the works of Muslim theologians and philosophers with no intention to disprove them, the great pains they take in collecting expensive libraries of Arabic books, and how much they praise the Arabs’ knowledge. He bitterly acknowledges that Christians ignore and neglect any literature other than that written in Arabic.⁷ Alvarus’ allegations, furthermore, go hand in hand with a harsh criticism of signs of social and religious assimilation among his fellow Christians, such as the practice of circumcision, or the use of Arabo-Islamic salutatory formulas and gestures.⁸ He believes that the adoption of these practices is a sign of surrender to the Antichrist, who he identifies with Islam.

Next to Alvarus’ relentless opposition to Arabic culture and literature in this passage, those found among tenth-century Jewish authors pale by comparison. Among Jews, criticism of Arabic metrics and grammatical studies appear to be a by-product of the defense of the Hebrew language, understood by some as a self-sufficient, bounded entity and a strategy to determine cultural meaning among competing groups. Alvarus, in contrast, takes his criticism considerably further, cataloging the dangers posed by Arabo-Islamic literature. Not only cul-

tural disciplines, such as theology, philosophy, and poetry, were singled out and condemned, but also the lifestyle that accompanied them, manifested in gestures or clothing, the obliteration of one's own identity, and the adoption of that of the Other. The process of translation from Latin into Arabic that took place in this period reveals, for example, a familiarity with the Qur'ān never displayed in Jewish sources, even in later periods. Neither the content of Alvarus' text, nor the literary polemical form Alvarus uses have any parallel whatsoever in tenth-century Jewish sources.

Resistance to the adoption of Arabic meters and to engagement in grammatical studies, mild though it was, has to be considered in conjunction with the development of cultural models within the Jewish society of the time. This process was different from the Christian one, as it is formulated in the *Indiculus Luminosus*. Alvarus's harsh criticism of the ways of life and the literary culture of Christians occupying high positions at court stands in vivid contrast to assertions like the one found in the letter to the Khazars, written by 'Abd al-Rahmān III's courtier, Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ. Ibn Shaprūṭ defends his position as a sign of God's favor toward his community, and as a compensation for the hardships endured.⁹ This social and intellectual ideal, which would soon become the hallmark of Andalusi Jewish culture, began to materialize in poems of praise that poets addressed to their benefactors. In this regard, several elements concerning the construction of identity are worth describing. Since the earliest moments, Hebrew panegyrics written in al-Andalus display a great appreciation of bilingualism that had not appeared in any of the explicit evaluations of Hebrew and Arabic languages, most commonly found in linguistic works, offered in the previous chapter. To re-state, evaluations of Arabic and Hebrew tended to result in a defense of Hebrew versus Arabic, even among authors who advocated linguistic comparison. However, in panegyrics, portraits or praises of members of the learned elite emphasized their command of both languages and their engagement in both cultures.¹⁰ This is best exemplified in a poetic fragment from Dunash ben Labraṭ's *dīwān*, which, much quoted, has become emblematic of the Andalusian culture. Dunash says: "May the garden of your delights be the sacred books, and your orchard the books of the Arabs."¹¹

Two different elements that work in conjunction with this appreciation of bilingualism or biculturalism that occurs mainly in panegyrics, are worth noting: first is the victory of the poet or patron over the Arabo-Muslim (and eventually the Christian) in poems of self-praise or panegyrics. These victories were won in intellectual battles, and occasionally, in physical ones; second is the Muslim (and Christian) recognition of the patron's intellectual competence and accomplishments in the poem. Thus, in one of his poems Dunash ben Labraṭ describes his addressee, Shemariah ben Elhanan, a scholar in Egypt, saying: "He exposes the ignorance of the Muslim sages,/his adversaries,"¹² and describing Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ, he states "East and West/his fame is exceeding and extraordinary. // In the house of Esau and in Arav/his magnificence is object of wonder."¹³

These examples show ways in which Muslims (and Christians) did not constitute an Other used to generate exclusions – as was the case in the tenth-century linguistic debate – but rather were a foil for the competition of Jewish poets. In these poems, Jewish poets did not represent themselves as on the periphery but in direct competition with Muslims for the command of a shared cultural system. It is quite clear that this attitude disproves a reading of medieval Jewish culture as a product of an inferiority complex regarding Arabic, or as a reaction toward it.¹⁴ Jewish poets defended their perception of cultural superiority versus Arabo-Muslims and Christians; the latter were worthy adversaries in a shared cultural system. Whereas in the discourse on language exclusions were made on account of the identification of the opponent with an Other, Christian or Muslim, or on account of the superimposition of religious categories upon linguistic categories, in poems of praise that are made to convey Arabo-Muslim and Christian recognition of a Jewish poet's work, the otherness simply fades away.

The command of knowledge as an integral part of the heroic model had a longstanding precedent in Jewish rabbinic tradition,¹⁵ as well as in Arabo-Islamic culture. Islamic sources of the tenth and eleventh centuries, following a tradition with quranic roots, thereby include the Sage among heroic figures, sometimes at the expense of the pious. In this sense, the acquisition and transmission of knowledge were considered as proof of virtue in both medieval Jewish and Islamic traditions.¹⁶

This employment of the Arabo-Muslim and the Christian as worthy but defeated adversaries, adversaries who are capable of recognizing the cultural and intellectual command of their opponent, stands in striking contrast to the attitude toward Arabs displayed in the sole example of *shu'ūbī* literature found in al-Andalus – the *Risāla* written Abū 'Āmir ibn García al-Bashkunṣī (eleventh century), a Muslim poet from Christian origin who was a secretary in the courts of Mujāhid and his son 'Ālī in the Taifa of Denia.¹⁷ In this text Ibn García establishes cultural superiority on the basis of the diminishing and belittling, if not denial, of Arabic culture. Therefore, while Ibn García boasts about his community's mastery of natural philosophy, exact logic, astronomy, music, arithmetic and geometry, he describes Arabs as “experts in the description of towering camels.”¹⁸ I am not aware of similar descriptions in Andalusi-Jewish sources.

The eleventh century: closing the cultural gap

While resistance to the use of Arabic meter was a lost cause at the turn of the tenth century, the two other phenomena surveyed – the mistrust of grammatical studies on the one hand, and the open endorsement of bilingualism and biculturalism, especially in poems of praise, on the other – are still present in eleventh-century texts.

In the previous chapter I referred to some passages in Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-Luma'* (*Sefer ha-Riqmah*) that showed signs of opposition to linguistic comparison

among the author's contemporaries. These same passages also show traces of a similar resistance from the same conservative circles to grammatical studies. Ibn Janāḥ feels compelled to explain, first, that opposition to grammar had actually been condoned by the Sages of the Talmud, who had rebuked the Galileans for being negligent in the study of this discipline. Second, he reminds his readers that grammar is crucial for the study of *halakhah*, or Jewish law, a scholarly pursuit situated at the core of the Hebrew tradition. Finally, and most importantly, he draws attention to the Arabs' consciousness of and care for their language, in contrast to how negligent Jews were in the grammatical knowledge of theirs.

With his remarks, Ibn Janāḥ tries to dismantle two pairs of opposites: on the one hand, the opposition between sacred and secular disciplines (*halakhah* versus grammar), and on the other, the opposition between the Self and the Other. Grammar becomes, in his eyes, a tool for *halakhah*, the Other a model for imitation. These two strategies allow him to translate cultural elements that could be deemed to be outside the Jewish tradition, as legitimate elements serving that tradition. In doing so, he not only silences eventual criticism from learned conservative sectors, but also creates a coherent concept of cultural identity that interprets foreign elements as a legitimate part of Jewish culture. Thus, he simply reduces cultural otherness.

While the Islamic tradition holds that grammar and lexicography (*'ulūm al-lisān*) were disciplines complementary to the study of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, criticism of these fields among some theologians, even philologists, also existed from the first Islamic centuries. Among these Muslim scholars, philology was often dismissed as a worldly pursuit, a sin that some of its practitioners felt compelled to expiate. As seems to have been the case with Andalusi Jews, the use of philology in the interpretation of the sacred text did not meet with absolute, universal acceptance within Arabo-Islamic culture at large.¹⁹

Bilingualism and biculturalism in panegyrics and poems of self-praise already found in tenth-century al-Andalus, became well established in any case. The cultural and intellectual training of a well rounded Sephardic intellectual, an ideal that takes definite shape in the eleventh century, emerged as a tripartite model, seen in the following lines by Samuel ha-Nagid, one of the most prominent among eleventh-century poets. Addressing the judge Joseph b. Samuel, the Nagid says:

I am a friend to those who find/Honey in the Scripture and take it out,
 A companion for those who fight/With the Talmud and conquer it,
 My mouth speaks correctly/To Qedar's heart and captivates it,
 Greeks put my words/Around their king's neck.
 I have reached with my wisdom/What he has not.²⁰

In another poem, in the form of a dialogue with his inner self, he lists the favors God has granted him as follows:

Do you remember that? And don't you remember when He granted you
 The elders' knowledge and good sense?
 When He made you knowledgeable in Scripture and Law,
 Which are prominent at the pinnacle of knowledge?
 When He revealed the Greek sciences to you
 And instructed you in the knowledge of the Arabs...
 Making your name great and powerful
 Beyond the sea and the lands of the West?"²¹

Furthermore, he describes a letter he received from Isaac ha-Dayyan as "a letter from Judah, with Hebrew words, and Greek science, versified in Arabic meter."²² In all these poems the Nagid encapsulates the cultural ideal of the Andalusi-Jewish intellectual, which plays a key role in shaping communal intellectual identity. In addition to the mastery of Hebrew and Jewish religious texts, the model that the Nagid puts forward incorporates expertise in Arabic culture and Greek science.²³ This cultural model that the Nagid endorses in his poems is a clear illustration of how the production of cultural meaning and the description of the Jewish learned elites duplicate those of the host culture. Thus, Jewish cultural domains and criteria of cultural excellence are identical to those of the Arabo-Islamic majority. Once more, the Nagid locates Jewish culture at the centre of the Andalusi cultural system and not in its periphery. It is instructive to recall how the same elements operate within the Arabo-Islamic milieu. Perfection in classical Arabic is usually invoked among Andalusi Muslims as a tool for building group identity.²⁴ Excellence in calligraphy as a key for political power is commonly singled out in the description of scholars in Arabo-Muslim sources, as it is the case with the eleventh-century *hājib* al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir.²⁵ Moreover, Arabic biographical dictionaries consistently describe Jewish authors as experts in both Arabic and Hebrew.²⁶ Finally, the spread of knowledge is also a common element in the description of the sage or the scholar, as I have already remarked.²⁷

In the domain of language, the tenth and eleventh centuries were characterized by a construction of "us" equivalent to Hebrew language and by exclusion of Arabic as the Other, even among those who defended comparison between Arabic and Hebrew. In portraying the intellectual elite, the "us" incorporated both Arabic and the cultural meaning prevalent in the hosting culture. In contrast to the bounded, homogeneous and stable discourse on language, these poems introduced complexity and heterogeneity as foundational components in shaping identity. Significant in this regard is a verse included in the first poem by the Nagid, quoted above: "My mouth speaks correctly/to Qedar's heart and captivates it." This verse stands in sharp contrast to that of Ibn Gabirol, in the introduction to his *Anaq* quoted in the first chapter: "Half [my contemporaries] speak in the language of the Edomites, the other half in that of the sons of Qedar, so dark."²⁸ When images of seduction and enchantment of Jews by Arabic culture or Islam surfaced in other contexts where they met with

disapproval, the Nagid, like other members of his generation was so confident in his literary skills so as to enchant Qedar's heart in Arabic. Along the same lines is a verse, also from one of the Nagid's poems, addressed to his son Joseph: "Joseph, take this book that I have selected for you from the most beautiful language of Qedar and 'Efah ... Take it, recite it and separate yourself from the community of those of stuttering lips."²⁹

The idea of superiority of the Andalusi Jewish scholar/poet versus his Muslim (and Christian) counterpart, a key role in panegyrics, is paralleled by a perception of the superiority of the Sephardim over the non-Sephardim, built on the same criteria. Thus Ibn Gabirol says in one of his poems referring to the Nagid:

His responsa are read throughout Babylonia
 And expounded by communal authorities.
 In the council of the heads in Nehardea and Sura,
 The great cities of jurisprudence...
 They say: "The Sephardim have discovered
 The wonders of concealed knowledge:
 They have seen the truth prevail in their Master
 While we see delusions.
 We dress in rags
 While they dress in the best finery
 Their arrogance is like that of lions,
 While we are like sheep.
 Wisdom's full grown shoots are picked for them
 While we pick dry grain."³⁰

The transmission of knowledge was one of the most relevant elements in the characterization of the Andalusi sage, especially that which increased his fame outside the Peninsula. The final three lines – rags versus finery, arrogance versus docility – are the terms that in other contexts, such as liturgical poetry, convey the relation of superiority/inferiority established between Muslims and Jews.³¹ These terms were used to convey the position of cultural superiority of Sephardim versus non-Sephardim in panegyrics.

In this regard, it is worthwhile to signal that an identical opposition between Andalusis and non-Andalusis found in works written by Arabo-Muslim authors in the Peninsula, attested in the following verses by Ibn Ḥazm:

I am the sun that shines in the heart's sky.
 My only defect is to have risen in the West.
 Had I risen in the East,
 What a plunder of the renown I now lack would it be!
 My soul is in love with Iraq's distant islands
 But it is a small wonder that a lover longs for his beloved.³²

Some vague echoes of opposition to this ideal of the Andalusi-Jewish poet/scholar that panegyrics popularized have survived, some in the poems of the Nagid himself, where the voices of a potential opponent and a literary opponent are, perhaps intentionally, blurred. Also critical of the ideal, as Bezalel Safran indicated long ago, is Bahya ibn Paqudah's work on ethics, *Kitāb al-hidāya ilā farā'id al-qulūb* (*Sefer hovot ha-levavot*/“Book of the Duties of the Hearts”).³³ In the fourth chapter, on humility, Ibn Paqudah (1040?–1110?) admonishes his contemporaries on the need to be humble in business transactions and in social interactions with one's contemporaries. Safran convincingly showed that Ibn Paqudah attacked directly the principles of *adab* that Jewish courtiers had internalized and defended as a legitimate part of their own culture. This attack, however, is not launched as an attack on the Other but as an exercise of self-criticism, with one minor exception – that of astrology. Among the different disciplines that *adab* encompassed, astrology is specifically targeted as a discipline foreign to the Jewish *ethos*. Ibn Paqudah, in fact, equated it to simple polytheism.

Ibn Paqudah's criticism of *adab* ideals is very different in tone and in content, to that of Alvarus of Cordova in the *Indiculus Luminosus*, more than a century earlier. Of course, differences in genre and in the social context in which both works, Alvarus' and Ibn Paqudah's were written, accounts for the different tones; but it appears that while Alvarus established a clear division between the Self and the Other, for Ibn Paqudah, that kind of opposition did not exist. In fact, Ibn Paqudah's criticism does not differ from similar critiques of the ideals of *adab* found in works written by Muslim authors. Ibn Paqudah's work represents a conservative reaction to social attitudes and cultural disciplines that were prevalent among both Jewish and Muslim intellectuals of the time.

The late eleventh and twelfth centuries: the transmission of the Andalusi cultural model

The bi- or tripartite division of knowledge is a key element in the legitimatization and transmission of cultural models that took form in two works strongly connected to the Arabo-Islamic world, yet written in Christian lands – the *Kitāb al-muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*, by Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, and the *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, a chronicle by Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1110–80). Both Ibn ‘Ezra’, in the fifth chapter of his *Kitāb*, and Ibn Daud, in the seventh section of his book, systematically reproduced this model of the learned scholar, in their respective portrayal of the Andalusi-Jewish elite. Ibn ‘Ezra’ summarizes the cultural ideal as that of those who “practiced every kind of science relating to law and jurisprudence (*‘ulūm al-shar‘iyya wa-l-fiqhiyya*) and the sacred book (*kitābiyya*), logic, astronomy, geometry and medicine.”³⁴

While Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ emphasizes the superiority of Arabic culture, in several of whose disciplines Andalusi Jewish authors would come to excel, Ibn Daud highlights how useful the knowledge amassed by Jewish authors was in

the Andalusi courts. Hence, he proffers that Joseph ibn Abitur (tenth–eleventh centuries) interpreted the Talmud in Arabic for the Umayyad caliph al-Hakam II.³⁵ Similarly, al-Mu'tamid, the 'Abbadid, Taifa king of Seville, appointed Rabbi Isaac ben Barukh ibn al-Baliah (1035–94) because he was knowledgeable in astrology, a scientific field which al-Mu'tamid himself is said to have known well.³⁶

The two preceding are clear examples that illustrate how prominent Muslim historical figures were used to validate a discipline or a body of literature. In the first example, al-Hakam II's appreciation of the Talmud and its contents comes to sanction "impartially" its paramount importance, while implicitly countering Karaite claims against rabbinic literature. A similar endorsement of astrology is evident in the second quotation.³⁷ To this effect, it is instructive to note that Abraham ibn Daud presumably wrote, in addition to the books that have survived, two other works, now lost. One dealt with astrology; the second was an anti-Karaite treatise. References abound in his work to direct intervention by the Muslim ruler, condoning certain decisions taken with the Jewish community, or receiving some benefit by association with them, all echoing anecdotes involving Jews and their relationship to Islamic rulers in Islamic historiography.³⁸

Beginning in Almoravid times, that is after 1086, a somewhat more explicit reaction or criticism of cultural disciplines and literary forms began to materialize. This reaction encompassed cultural areas that had not yet been addressed in texts, the first being explicit responses to the Qur'ān. In fact, there is very little known about the familiarity with and opposition to Islamic religious sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-islāmiyya*) among Jewish authors, both in al-Andalus and in the rest of the Islamic world. In theory, the sale of a Qur'ān or a book of *hadīth* to *dhimmīs* was forbidden by Islamic law.³⁹ Moreover, most of the classical documents listing legal restrictions regarding Christians and Jews prohibited them from studying the Qur'ān or teaching it to their children. Sometimes children were kept away from Islamic schools and Islamic teachers.⁴⁰

Although it is unlikely that these restrictions were effective, evidence of actual knowledge of Islamic religious sciences among Jews remains scant. Only small details scattered throughout the sources shed a little light. Thus, Islamic sources mention, for example, books relating to the religious sciences among those owned by Joseph, son of Samuel ibn Nagrīlah (1035–66).⁴¹ As for the Qur'ān, while it is true that it is not mentioned in medieval Jewish inventories of books, there is evidence of quranic phraseology in Jewish sources since the tenth century. It is always difficult to prove that these authors had direct access to the text, as they may have been quoting commonly used oral expressions without an understanding of their provenance.⁴²

Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, one of the few medieval Jewish authors to adduce quranic quotations in his work, may well be unique in his explicit indication of the origin of those quotations,⁴³ and in openly sanctioning their use. It seems clear that Ibn ‘Ezra’ countered potential reactions against the use of the Qur'ān as a

textual source within the Jewish community. He clearly acknowledges the existence of that opposition when he wrote:

After quoting the Arabs' Qur'ān, I do not experience the same disgust that some hypocrites among the sages of our community nowadays claim to experience, as I have seen that the greatest jurists and the most important *Mutakallimūn*, such as Rabbi Sa'adia, Rabbi Hai, and other theologians do also rely on it to solve the absurd aspects of the prophecies.... They even resort to Christian exegesis, in spite of its little basis. However, this group [of opponents I have referred to] pays great attention and looks in detail at minutiae when they are blind to their own monstrosities. [The Sages] have said: "Everyone who says wise words, even among the nations, is a sage" (BT *Megillah* 16a). What is learned in their words is the heart of science and not the skin of form.⁴⁴

Ibn 'Ezra' opposes contemporary Talmudists, and by the same token makes clear that the excellence of the literary form does not force one to accept the truth of Muḥammad's prophetic character. He also refers to translations of the Qur'ān in a famous often quoted passage. When asked by an Islamic scholar to translate the Ten Commandments into Arabic, Ibn 'Ezra' asks him to translate the first *sūra* of the Qur'ān into Latin, which he, of course, declines. This passage has to be understood in the context of a polemical debate, regarding the translation of the Qur'ān. Thus, among the examples of accusations of blasphemy in Almoravid times is that of a Muslim accused of reciting the *sūra* of Yūsuf in 'ajamiyya.⁴⁵ As Fierro indicates in her study of Islam in the Taifa period, the thirteenth-century Muslim scholar al-Qurṭubī asserts in his *I'lām bi-mā fī dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām* ("Proclaiming the Distortion and Illusions Existing within the Christian Faith") that, were the Qur'ān to be translated, it would not be the Qur'ān any longer.⁴⁶

As opposed to the almost nonexistent reaction for or against the knowledge and use of Islamic religious sciences, secular sciences elicited a somewhat stronger reaction. Previously, sciences had been at the core of the intellectual training of the Andalusi intellectual, studied and practiced by Talmudists and experts in Jewish law. The study and practice of sciences had not elicited any negative response. However, beginning in the Almoravid period, some authors reveal a need to legitimize the sciences as part of the curriculum. Several passages of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* give proof of this need. In the conversation held between the Khazars' king and the Rabbi, the latter asserts that "members of the Sanhedrin were bound not to let any science ... escape their knowledge,"⁴⁷ as sciences (natural sciences and astronomy) were instrumental for the practice of the law. As for music, Halevi argues, biblical figures such as David and Samuel were the archetypical adepts. For Halevi, once the intrinsic value of sciences and arts was shown, and once biblical precedents provided for their legitimate practice, it remained to dissociate them from the Other. Therefore, regarding the arts,

the Khazars' king acknowledged, referring to his own time, that "servants and half crazy people are patrons [of the arts]"⁴⁸ to which the Rabbi replies: "The roots and principles of all sciences were handed down from us first to the Chaldeans, then to the Persians and Medians, then to Greece, and finally to the Romans. On account of the length of this period, and many upheavals, it was forgotten that they had originated with the Hebrews, and so they were ascribed to the Greeks and Romans."⁴⁹ Thus, sciences were attributed to Greeks and Romans, when they belonged, Halevi argues, originally to the Jewish people. Interestingly, a similar concern with the Other's appropriation of knowledge is found in a contemporary *hisba* treatise that prohibits the sale of books of science to Jews and Christians as they would "translate scientific books and attribute them to themselves and their bishops, when these are works [written] by Muslims."⁵⁰

In turn, the passage by Halevi just quoted is completely consistent with his description of the decay of Hebrew, and with his understanding of Christianity and Islam as mere imitators of Judaism.⁵¹ It is also worth noticing that philosophy is not included among "the sciences." Thus, Halevi's defense of the sciences as part of the *ethos* of Jewish culture and identity in the *Kuzari* contrasts with the clear anti-philosophical tendency of the book and with other anti-rationalist passages in his poetry, where "Greek philosophy" is singled out and understood as foreign. The following is a clear and well-known example: "May Greek philosophy not fool you" – he admonishes his addressee in one of his poems – "It does not grow fruit, but only flowers."⁵²

Similar strategies in defense of the sciences, yet from a rationalist point of view, are also found in Maimonides' work. In two different passages of his *Dalālat al-hā'irīn* (*Moreh Nevukhim*) Maimonides reassures his readers that astronomy does not contradict anything said by the prophets and the rabbis. "Our community (*milla*) is a community that is full of knowledge and is perfect," he concludes.⁵³ Ironically, understanding the sciences as something foreign to Israel, in Maimonides' view, is a sign of assimilation to the ignorant ideas prevalent among the nations. What Maimonides considers to be foreign is the lack of recognition of the sciences as legitimate disciplines, not their actual practice. The following passage is illustrative in this respect:

When the wicked from among the ignorant (*jāhiliyya*) communities ruined our good qualities, destroyed our words of wisdom and our compilations, and caused our men of knowledge to perish, so that we again became ignorant, as we had been threatened because of our sins – for it says: "And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:14); when, furthermore, we mingled with these communities and their opinions were taken over by us, as were their morals and actions, – for just as it says regarding the similarity of actions: "They mingled themselves with the communities and learned their works," it says with regard to the adop-

tion by us of the opinions of the ignorant: “And they please themselves in the children of strangers” (Isaiah 2:6), which is translated by Jonathan ben Uziel, peace be upon him: “And they walk according to the laws of the Gentiles,” when, in consequence of all this, we grew up accustomed to the opinions of the ignorant, these philosophic views appeared to be, as it were, foreign to our Law, just as they are foreign to the opinions of the ignorant.⁵⁴

Occasionally, however, Maimonides also describes the sciences as foreign. This occurs in a paragraph of the letter he sent to Rabbi Jonathan of Lunel, when he conceives of the Torah as a legitimate wife and the sciences as foreign lovers. “[The Torah] became my beloved wife,” he states, “the spouse of my youth, with whose love I grew up from my youth. However, I also knew many foreign women, Moabites and Ammonites … God knows that these were only chosen to do works of cooking and baking for her.”⁵⁵ Overall, however, both Maimonides’s and Halevi’s works reveal an effort to translate the practice of the sciences as a legitimate part of the curriculum. In turn, their work simultaneously tells of a trend in othering scientific knowledge.

Among the sciences, astrology constituted a particular category in need of justification. Not surprisingly, the status of astrology was a matter of controversy among medieval authors to the point that most notorious champions of the sciences, such as Maimonides, opposed its practice.⁵⁶ Three roughly contemporary authors – Abraham bar Ḥiyya’ (d. ca. 1136), Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1110–80), and Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ (1089–1164) – use similar tactics to incorporate astrology into the Jewish tradition. Let us take the youngest as an example. In his *Megillat ha-megalleh* (“Scroll of the Revealer”)⁵⁷ the prominent philosopher and scientist Bar Ḥiyya’ defends astrology with methods identical to those used by Ibn Janāḥ in his defense of grammatical studies – he adduces biblical passages that, in his view, sanction the discipline, refers back to the generally acknowledged authority of Sa’adia, and corroborates the practice of astrology among earlier rabbinic authorities.⁵⁸ In addition, Bar Ḥiyya’ reminds his audience of how beneficial astrology would be for Israel, as it would bring consolation to those waiting for the final redemption, and how instrumental it could be as a polemical instrument against the nations. The goal of the book, as he acknowledges, is “to give proof to the nations of the world, who do not have faith in the Torah and cannot be refuted with religious arguments,”⁵⁹ a statement that seems to counter the progressive othering of the sciences which I have just mentioned.

In spite of Abraham bar Ḥiyya’s words in support of astrology, those who attacked the discipline were in the majority. Condemnation of astrology had already played a considerable role as part of the general critique of the ideals of *adab* and the way of life of the courtier class in Bahya ibn Paqudah’s work. He described it as linked to the practice and custom of other nations since biblical times, hence foreign to Judaism. Its practice “leads to lack of belief in God and

finally to complete denial of Him.”⁶⁰ Analogous to Bahya’s is Maimonides’s position in his epistle on astrology, addressed to the Jews of Montpellier.⁶¹ In Maimonides’ view, astrology is radically incompatible with monotheism. Moreover, and more radically, according to him, it was the reason Israel lost its independence as a nation. Maimonides, it is true, identifies its practice with Chaldeans, Canaaneans and Egyptians, and does not relate it to Greece or to the Arabo-Islamic culture.

Similar reactions against sciences other than those which were strictly Islamic had been the norm, rather than the exception, among traditionalist Muslim scholars since early Islamic times. Most scholars agreed on this bipolar division between the native, Islamic sciences, and those imported from other peoples, which were assumed to inevitably lead to loss of faith.⁶² Tension and conflict between them and their practitioners was never absolutely absent, medicine and mathematics being among the few to escape some sort of periodic opposition.⁶³ A very significant reaction against the sciences took place in al-Andalus, by the end of the tenth century, at which point the *ḥājib* al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir had all books of the sciences of the Ancients (*al-‘ulūm al-qadīma* or *al-‘ulūm al-awā’il*) collected and burned.⁶⁴ A similar episode occurred under the Almohad caliph Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf al-Manṣūr (1184–99) who was under the influence of circles of pietists and conservative theologians. As among Sephardic Jews, astrology was often the preferred target of Muslim theologians.⁶⁵

In addition to a growing ambivalence toward the sciences, the twelfth century also witnessed a newly emerging attitude toward poetry in general, and toward specific poetic genres in particular – this paralleled the trend of othering with respect to the sciences. Thus, in a section of the *Kuzari* dealing with the Christian and Muslim proclivities to heresy, Halevi contends “they praise it [poetry] in popular songs which are in everybody’s mouth, and which are loud in asserting that there is no king who rules over the actions of man, none who rewards or punishes them.”⁶⁶ This attitude had already been criticized among Muslim authors. Ibn Ḥazm, for example, had expressed disapproval of all poetry other than ascetic and religious poetry, and had warned against panegyrics and eulogies, two poetic forms that, though not forbidden, were not commendable either.⁶⁷ Although Hirschfeld, editor and translator of the *Kuzari*, identifies the poems to which Halevi refers with Arabic and Persian poems in the style of the Persian poets Ibn Sīna (b. 980) and Omar Khayyam (b. 1048), Halevi must necessarily be referring, rather, to poems circulating among his Christian and Muslim contemporaries – these were written in the aftermath of the Almoravid arrival on the Peninsula, and most likely as a result of it.

A somewhat more general contempt for poetry is recorded in Maimonides’ works. While Maimonides’ attitude toward liturgical poetry is ambivalent, he is consistently opposed to secular poetry and song.⁶⁸ In the *Dalālāt al-hā’irīn* he scorns a learned man who had challenged him with an objection regarding the name of God, and accuses him of engaging in theoretical speculation after

having glanced at the Bible as he “would glance through a historical work or a piece of poetry – when in some of your [his] hours of leisure, you [he] leave off drinking and copulating.”⁶⁹ Maimonides’ disdain for poetry in this passage goes hand in hand with his poor regard for history. Criticism of both disciplines, as well as condemnation of lust and alcohol, echo Ibn Paqudah’s criticism of *adab* ideals, yet in more explicit terms. Ibn Paqudah, in fact, had no love for history, as he deemed historical narrative to be the most inferior of all biblical genres. The study of history, according to Ibn Paqudah, made people follow their own desires, and drew them into misguided behavior.⁷⁰

While Maimonides does not make any reference to non-Jews in his scorn for historical and poetic genres, some other passages are explicit in this regard. Elaborating on the prohibition of using obscene language (BT *Ketubbot* 8b), Maimonides advises against using the faculty of speech⁷¹ to say “what the ignorant and sinful Gentiles say in their songs and their stories (*akhbār*), suitable for them but not for those to whom it has been said: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6).”⁷² Those who have applied their thought or speech to drinking or copulation, or have recited songs about those matters are, in Maimonides’ opinion, disobedient toward God. Poetry and history are once again singled out, and this time they are clearly associated with the Gentiles.

Furthermore, in an excursus opening Maimonides’ commentary on the tenth chapter of tractate Sanhedrin, known as *Perek Heleg*, the association of song and history with Arabs comes to the foreground. In explaining the term “epicurean,” Maimonides refers to the knowledge of “strange books” written by heretics, among them the books of Ben Sira, who “wrote books of fantastic matters, in which there is neither wisdom, nor value, but [which are] just a waste of time with banal subjects, such as those books that are found among Arabs – *books of chronicles, books on the kings' ways of life, on genealogies of the Arab tribes, books of songs* and the like in which there is neither wisdom nor usefulness, but only waste of time.”⁷³

Maimonides’s explicit reaction deserves further attention since it appears to be unparalleled among his predecessors and contemporaries. In a long article from the mid-1930s Salo W. Baron interpreted Maimonides’ attitude toward historiography as a clear opposition to combination of astrology and history by Abraham bar Ḥiyya⁷⁴ in his *Megillat ha-megalleh*. Astrology and poetry, often included in historical works, are perhaps the two disciplines that elicited the most mistrust among Jewish authors. In the passage quoted above, Maimonides targets two typically pre-Islamic historiographical forms – *akhbār* and genealogies – distinctively intended to preserve and foster tribal identity through the remembrance of heroic deeds. Within the Islamic context, historiography was strongly connected to the centers of Islamic power,⁷⁴ one of its most basic forms being dynastic historiography, which stressed the moral and ethical qualities of the caliphs – in other words, the Islamic ideal.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the knowledge of history was notably

absent in, for example, the description of the Andalusi Jewish elite that Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ and Abraham ibn Daud transmitted in their work. There was a significant exception, though – that of Joseph ibn Nagrīlah, whose education Ibn ‘Ezra’ describes in the following terms: “After knowledge of the Hebrew [culture], his greatest knowledge was [in] Arabic culture – language, poems, *zajals*, books of history (*akhbār*), chronicles (*ayyām*) and ancient records (*āthār*).”⁷⁵ Ibn ‘Ezra’ acknowledges that these disciplines were related to power, for he explains that his training in them was “due to the exercise of power to which he was obliged, and the matters of government conferred to him.”⁷⁶

Besides its instrumental importance in the exercise of power, historiography also had a key role in education, something that might as well be influencing Maimonides’ opposition. The earliest form of Islamic historiography – the *khabar* – is a direct descendant of the battle narrative. It is a short account, sometimes combined with poetry, which describes a scene graphically and entertainingly. On account of its lighthearted character, it was used as a tool to stimulate interest in and knowledge of Islam among youth. To this effect, Baron has read Maimonides’ contempt for the writing of history as a direct response to its potential danger in seducing non-Muslims to convert, as demonstrated by the autobiographical account written by the famed Samaw’al al-Maghribī (d. 1175) a mathematician and physician of North African origin who converted from Judaism to Islam.⁷⁷

This narrative, conceived as an attack against his former faith and coreligionists, Samaw’al claims to have been fascinated, as a twelve- or thirteen-year-old, by records of the past and stories that taught him what had happened in ancient times. By reading short stories, he became infatuated by cycles of heroic tales, which piqued his interest in real historical accounts, such as the *Tajārib al-umam* (“Experiences of the Nations”) by the Persian scientist, philosopher and historian Abū ‘Alī ibn Miskawayh (930–1030), or the *Tārīkh* (“Annals (of the Apostles and Kings)”) by the celebrated exegete and historian al-Ṭabarī (ca. 839–923). It was precisely in reading these books of history that he became progressively more familiar with “accounts of the Prophet, his conquests, the miracles God performed for him, and the wonders he was given to work … the story of his beginnings in orphanhood and wretchedness; the animosity of his own people toward him,”⁷⁸ and other events of Islamic history. As a final step in this intellectual journey, whose point of departure had been the reading of *akhbār*, Samaw’al recognizes the “miracle of the Qur’ān, which human eloquence cannot rival.”⁷⁹ In sum, what Samaw’al described in his *Iḥṣām al-yahūd* and what Maimonides recognized is the importance of Islamic history as a preliminary step in a process of initiation that could potentially lead to a recognition of the prophetic mission of Muḥammad and the miraculous character of the Qur’ān.⁸⁰

It must be added that historiography had elicited a similar mistrust among some circles of Muslim theologians. Following the first Arab conquests, books that had been taken as booty were classified, so that books of history were categorized as illegitimate. Likewise, early Islamic historiographers did not show

any particular interest in Greek and Byzantine historical books, but only in Arabic pre-Islamic or Judeo-Christian history, as they considered Islam to be its direct continuation.⁸¹

Further developments in the thirteenth century

The signs of re-evaluation of Andalusi Jewish cultural models and the othering of cultural content emerging in the Almoravid period merely anticipate later conflicts; the ever-present opposition between sacred and profane would come clearly into the open in the early thirteenth century in reference to the reception of Maimonides's works in the Hispanic kingdoms and Provence. The association of the cultural disciplines and literary forms with Arabo-Muslims, as yet very diluted, would become manifest.

Attacks against licentious popular poetic forms in the work of Halevi and Maimonides would translate into generalized accusations of falseness by the late twelfth, early thirteenth centuries. Classical poetic forms were perceived as incapable of offering a cohesive vision of the world, and poetry would thus fall under attack.⁸² Scholars, especially those coming from outside of the Peninsula, would harshly criticize poets who sing about “things that must not be looked at,” as well as those who “have written books on the love of women and their guiles. . . [Those who] have appropriated biblical verses . . . and applied them to the shameful vices of women.”⁸³ Incidentally, Jews traveling or moving to the Peninsula would notice both the practice of polygamy among Sephardim and the fact that some Jews had Muslim concubines. Both observations, along with the representation of the Arabic and Hebrew languages as women in this period,⁸⁴ indicate a gendered construction of othering that, with the notable exception of liturgical poetry, seems to be a thirteenth-century phenomenon.⁸⁵ The ideal of *adab*, as a whole, criticized by Ibn Paqudah in al-Andalus, would become a clear target in the attack against the Jewish courtiers in Christian courts.

However, the real debate where intellectual and social categories would be scrutinized and re-evaluated involved the study of the sciences in general, and philosophy in particular. Translations from Arabic into Hebrew perpetuated the need to legitimize the sciences. Strategies to justify their study and translation did not change. Those who translated Arabic works written by Muslim authors into Hebrew would justify the need for translation on the basis of the need to preserve their useful contents. Following Halevi and Maimonides, some of these translators presented the sciences as knowledge that had originally belonged to Israel and was then lost, as a result of Israel’s exile among the nations.

Traditionalists, in their rejection of scientific disciplines, clearly identified and labeled their opponent as a generic Gentile, and more particularly, as an Ishmaelite. Thus, the famed scholar Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides) (1194–ca. 1270) complained in a letter sent to the Rabbis of France about the unfortunate fate of those Sephardim who had “been exiled from their Father’s table and they

defiled themselves with the king's food and with the wine which they drank; they mingled themselves with the nations and learned from their works.”⁸⁶ Also well known is another passage by Nahmanides describing the Jewish courtier class: “Why is our generation different from all others, that in our time sinners are abetted and men suspected of immorality are invested with authority and honors? The community is sold for nothing, to men who do not pray, recite no grace over their meals, are not careful with their bread and wine, and secretly even desecrate the Sabbath – *veritable Ishmaelites*.⁸⁷

This association of the rationalists with Greeks and Gentiles in general, and with Ishmaelites in particular, persisted well into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus Solomon ibn Adret (ca. 1235–1310), within the traditionalist camp, asserts, referring to those who interpret the Torah in an allegorical way: “They are more estranged than the Gentiles, for the latter fulfill some of the commandments, while they strongly desire to uproot all. The chief reason is that they are infatuated with alien sciences, Sidonian and Moabitish, and pay homage to the Greek books.... The children ... are taught the books and the language of the Chaldeans, instead of rising eager to study the Jewish faith in the house of their teachers.... How can we deal falsely against our soul and entice our heart to seek the deceptions of Greek philosophy? Those whose eyes look before them, how can they walk with their faces turned backward and ally themselves with Arabic philosophy?”⁸⁸ Likewise, the anti-Maimonidean scholar Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov (ca. 1380–1441) asserts that many distinguished sages in Spain and in the other kingdoms had felt “compelled to study and investigate the ways of Greek, Moslem and Christian, and other nations which were likewise drawn to scientific observation.”⁸⁹ He also observes that the rabbis of the Talmudic period had advised against “the study of Greek wisdom.” The precedent remarks are only a few examples evincing a trend in criticizing the sciences by associating them with the Other. Again, it is significant that this adversarial attitude toward knowledge, perceived as deriving from an Arabo-Islamic context, takes place in the Hispanic kingdoms. As many of the traditionalist groups saw philosophy as a vehicle facilitating conversion and weakening religious commitment, associating it with the Other served their purposes perfectly. In turn, defenders of the rationalist group would ground the study of the sciences in a long, uninterrupted tradition, from Sa'adia to Maimonides, and would understand them as a legitimate part of the curriculum.

In contrast to the marked opposition between Arabic and Hebrew described in Chapter 1, where Arabic was often opposed to Hebrew and Hebrew was the term defining identity, intellectual disciplines and literary forms perceived as imported from an Arabo-Islamic context do not register a significant adversarial reaction. Moreover while dichotomies based on language favor a polarization between Arabic and Hebrew, the representation of the Andalusi Jewish scholar incorporates multilingualism and multiculturalism as fundamental components of the intellectual ideal. The description of the intellectual elites mainly found in

panegyrics, for example, reduces cultural otherness to the minimum. Muslims (and Christians) are not portrayed as an Other, but rather used as worthy competitors against whom criteria of cultural superiority are constructed, or meant to sanction and validate that cultural superiority. This fading of cultural otherness stands in vivid contrast to the Mozarabic attitude toward the Arabo-Islamic culture, or to the position of Ibn García, who authored the only *shu‘ubī* text written in al-Andalus to have survived.

When opposition to a given discipline, a literary form, or a cultural practice surfaces in al-Andalus it seems to replicate, in parallel, similar reactions produced within the context of the Arabo-Islamic culture. Hence this reaction is best understood as part of a shared tension between more or less conservative groups with both the Arabo-Islamic and the Jewish traditions. The construction of cultural meaning and the reaction toward some aspects of it was identical in both contexts. In the Jewish sphere this latent reaction that only occurs sporadically in the Andalusi period materialized outside al-Andalus. It is precisely with the movement across the border that begins to take place in the last quarter of the eleventh century that a progressive trend in othering certain areas of the Andalusi Jewish tradition becomes apparent. In his *Kitāb*, Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ felt compelled to legitimize the knowledge and quotation of the Qur‘ān, as well as the writing of poetry according to Arabic patterns. Similarly, the *Kuzari* by Ibn ‘Ezra’s contemporary Judah Halevi and certain passages in the works of Maimonides legitimize the sciences as part of Israel’s *ethos*. Simultaneously, an increasing disregard for poetry, science or history becomes even more apparent.

The explicit association of these disciplines with a generic Other and the more specific identification of their practitioners with Ishmaelites did not take place, though, until the thirteenth century. The association with the Other in this context is meant to exclude a particular sub-cultural group or tendency.⁹⁰ In the broad cultural sense, references to polygamy or to songs dealing with “the shameful vices of women” point to a gendered construction of the Other, in tune with a similar emphasis of gender on the grounds of language, as discussed in the first chapter.

The question remains, why the construction of Self and Other and the opposition between both terms is much more significant when it comes to the reactions toward language than in the context of intellectual disciplines and literary forms. The answer to that question is multifaceted and only tentative. It seems that the discourse on language, provides more clear dichotomies to create strong oppositions. Second, as indicated in the introduction to this chapter, discussion of aspects such as the first or the most beautiful of languages are religiously charged and can be considered a subcategory of the religious debates. It is worth noting, however, that these discussions on language were also common among Arabo-Muslims (and by extension Christians), and consequently, a common component in a shared system of cultural meaning.

LIVING IN THE PRESENT

The concepts of exile and domicile

Time constitutes a major parameter in organizing individual and collective human experience. Far from being a universal category, time's conceptualization and categorization are subject to change and differ from culture to culture.¹ Moreover, within each culture different conceptions of time concur. Hence, biological time, the natural cycle of the sun, the moon and the seasons in different systems of chronology, the ritual time of the liturgical calendar, a group's sense of its own past, present, and future, and the idea of cosmic time – all overlap in individual and collective attempts of connecting and, therefore, imposing meaning on disjointed events.

To explore the medieval Jewish perception of time, one must rely on the representations of time that appear within given texts. Recent scholarship on Jewish history and the philosophy of history have examined the representation of time in medieval Jewish texts; these studies are indebted to different degrees to Yosef Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*.² Most scholars agree in stressing the strong sense of continuity between past and future conveyed in the texts. Such a representation of collective time had two generally recognized effects. First, it created a tendency to understand any major event in terms of a familiar archetype or paradigm inherited from the past. Second, it projected the present, identified with *galut* ("exile") onto an eschatological future, understood as *ge'ullah* ("redemption").³

The understanding of time works in conjunction with the recognition of space to the extent that representations of time and descriptions of place become inextricably entwined. Most medieval Jews lived far from the land of Israel. This historical reality created both a constant sense of uprootedness, displacement, and estrangement, as well as an ambivalent response toward the lands in which they lived, lands that in Yerushalmi's words were as much lands of exile as domiciles.⁴

This chapter will explore the representation of the Other, within the context of a specific place and time – that of al-Andalus from the tenth to the late twelfth centuries.⁵ It seems appropriate, then, to begin with a clarification of the various meanings of the Hebrew term *galut*.⁶ First, and most notably, *galut* denotes the national or historical exile of Israel. To this effect, the term not only makes

reference to the loss of the land God gave to the Israelite/Jewish people as inheritance, but also to the places to which the communities relocated and the state of being that characterized the lives of their members in those places.⁷ Within this collective-national framework, the idea of *galut* always goes hand in hand with that of *ge'ullah* (“redemption”).

Second, *galut* also implies the exodus of large populations because of social and political crises. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries, the fragmented and unstable political map of the Iberian Peninsula augmented the risk of dislocation of local groups. The civil war, or *fitna*, fought in the twilight of the Caliphate, is one such instance. It forced families such as those of Ibn Nagrīlah, Ibn Gabirol, and Ibn Khalfun, all eleventh-century Jewish poets, to move from the capital, Cordova, and left an imprint in their writings. This imprint is also echoed in the writings of Ibn Darrāj al-Qastallī, Ibn Shuhayd, and Ibn Zaydūn, contemporary Muslim poets whose families shared a similar fate. The most significant exodus of Jewish population took place under the rule of the Almoravides and Almohads. As discussed previously, significant numbers of Jews, as well as Christians, left al-Andalus for the Christian Northern kingdoms after 1086. An even more drastic displacement occurred in 1147, after the Almohad conquest of al-Andalus. Meanwhile, the advance of the Christian “Reconquista,” especially after the fall of Toledo in 1085, brought about a similar exodus of Muslims from the Peninsula to North Africa.

Finally, the term *galut* also describes forced or voluntary experiences of personal exile, caused by travel, trade or pursuit of knowledge. This *galut* was familiar to scholars and poets, compelled to move from court to court in a never ending search for patronage. Under the label *al-hanīn ilā al-awṭān* (“yearning for one’s homeland”), the unhappiness and homesickness felt by travelers, traders, and scholars/poets was considered a distinct genre in Arabic literature.⁸

The three preceding experiences of exile that the term *galut* encompasses – two of them shared by Christians and Muslims in the Peninsula – all imply displacement in one form or another. In the literary representation of exile, however, displacement does not necessarily equal a real experience. Thus, the lament on the ruins and the camel section that are central to classical Arabic *qaṣīdas* and that occasionally occur in Hebrew poems, might have originated in a real experience in pre-Islamic times, but were formally reproduced for generations in the poetic form, under different social conditions. Furthermore, the experience of exile does not have to require mobility across geographical spaces. Many poets who suffered and complained about exile never left home. The flow of time, the loss of youth, and the absence of friends nurtured an estrangement and alienation described as exile in poetical writing.⁹

From a philosophical standpoint, exile can also be understood as part of a more general, universal phenomenon. Medieval thinkers and poets influenced by Neo-Platonism conceived the soul as in exile in the body, longing for the reunion with its divine source, its “homeland.”¹⁰ Furthermore, the thirteenth century witnessed the most far-reaching development of the term. Among

medieval kabbalists, *separation* was thought to affect all levels of existence.¹¹ Sufis also conceived of Islam's original state as a *ghārib* ("stranger"), according to the *hadīth*.¹²

Both the experience of exile and the literary representation of exile intensify the dialectic relationship between individual and community, Self and the Other. In literature, exile acts as a powerful social metaphor with the capacity to connect two different ideas – the idea of personal Self, based on individual identity, and the idea of collective self, defined in the context of and by the consensus of the group to which one belongs and with which one identifies. Moreover, exile constantly forces the self-definition of a displaced social group with respect to the Other, most often the majority society.¹³ Analyzing the representation of that Other within the domain of exile is particularly difficult, as it requires taking into consideration not only the literary genre in which it is represented, but also the often multiple sense of exile, whether experienced or not, that a given author provides in his writing. The following pages aim to present significant examples of ways in which exile and its counterpart, domicile, are represented in the texts, and also to identify the main metaphors depicting the Other and the attitudes toward the Other within that discourse.

Al-Andalus

The present as a time of collective-national exile

While relatively absent from medieval thought,¹⁴ the idea of *galut* as the collective historical exile of Israel is widespread in liturgy and liturgical poetry.¹⁵ With some notable exceptions, scholars continue to consider liturgical poetry from two equally reductionist perspectives. On the one hand, liturgical poems are called a mere collection of *topoi* and clichés, a "fossilized poetry" of sorts, that lacks any connection with the context in which it was produced. Hence, it is deemed not to have particular relevance for the study of attitudes, as it did not change over time. On the other hand, the concept of exile continues to be analyzed on the exclusive basis of these poems, without any connection to other types of texts.¹⁶ Both approaches necessarily lead to partial and misguided conclusions. Liturgical poetry is as legitimate as any other source to explore relationships between text and context and to analyze how the text constructs reality. Admittedly, as a genre, it presents highly standardized forms and conventions and depends on the statutory prayer after which it is inserted. This does not mean, however, that it remains immune to change. Liturgical poems perform a key role in the group's construction of its own identity, vis-à-vis the Other. This construction of identity depends upon the context and cannot occur outside the possibilities the context offers. While it is true that liturgical poems safeguard collective memory, memory is nothing more than, in Amos Funkenstein's words, "a projection of the present and its structures."¹⁷

It seems advisable, then, to offer a few examples of Andalusi liturgical poetry within a chronological sequence. Unless otherwise indicated, all the poetic examples are not unique occurrences. Rather, they are archetypes, representative of a specific poet's work or of a particular period of time.

The tenth-century poet Ibn Capron wrote a liturgical poem that was among the earliest to have been written in the Peninsula. It includes most of the basic elements that sketch the relationship between Self and Other in the present tense.

I fear/the Creator of heaven,
 And find no words./My lips are mute.
 I am young and humble/and yet I experience your mercy
 Like a comely elder,/faultless and upright in his ways.
 Your mercy I will declare¹⁸/with strong heart,
 And will not utter one more word/as I am too young.
 I stand up/with consent of young and old.
 As I proceed to speak, O God,/be merciful with me!
 As I invoke You,/[O God,] pay heed.
 To You, Eternal Rock,/the helpless can commit himself.
 Radiant God, in your dwelling/do not hide your eyes
 But take revenge/on [our] assailants.
 They destroyed your Temple/and dragged me,
 Catching my feet in traps and nets.
 Our glory has been despised,/our heart wounded.
 [As if] we had no father,/and had become orphans.
 We fell in disgrace/and were consumed.
 While they strike down your Temple/with axes and hatchets.
 We have been dispersed and despised/over the world,
 Seen in contempt by nations,/in derision by peoples.
 They rage, plot [against me]/and plow upon my back (Psalms 129:3),
 Whisper against me/day and night.
 Make me rejoice again/and answer my plea,
 O God, the king who sits/on a Throne of mercy.¹⁹

Ibn Capron's poem, a *selīḥah* ("penitential poem"), encapsulates several distinct ideas common to most liturgical poems of national lament. Following genre conventions, the poet portrays himself as inadequate to address God, and yet resolute in his intention to do so. The poetic persona also alternates between the singular and the collective voices, that is, the poet addresses God as an individual but also as the spokesperson for his community. This poem is, in fact, exemplary in conveying the public, performatory function of the poem as a recitation in the midst of, and with the consensus of, the assembly to which the individual poet belongs. As it is uttered by the poet in a public liturgical setting, the poem becomes the community's voice. Thus, Ibn Capron calls for God's

involvement in the drama in which he and his community are subjected to a generic enemy. This unspecified enemy destroyed the Temple and enslaved, dispersed, and despised Israel. The poet eloquently describes loss – the loss of a sacred place and the loss of status – as well as the dream of recovering from such loss, as defining elements of his/their present. Ibn Capron's poem provides a canvas-like structure into which other elements that contribute to the central plot, such as the causes of the present situation, the portrayal of the enemy, the description of future redemption, and God's response to the poet, may be integrated easily.

The portrayal of the enemy is a central element also encountered in roughly contemporary liturgical poems by Dunash ben Labraṭ, Joseph ibn Abitur, and Isaac ibn Mar Saul. Typically, this Other is dual and described according to a wide variety of biblical types. Edom/Esau and their offspring are the most widespread symbol for Christians, while Ishmael and his descendants stand for Arabs and/or Muslims.²⁰ Thus, in one of his poems, the tenth-century grammarian and poet Dunash ben Labraṭ supplicates God “to pluck up Edom” and “darken Qedar’s face,” Qedar being one of Ishmael’s sons.²¹ Identification of Muslims and Christians goes far beyond the progenies of Ishmael and Esau to include a wide variety of other biblical figures, groups, and even locations. In a similar vein to the verse just quoted above, Dunash states: “[O God,] as in a wine press, tread upon Boṣrah, and also upon Babylon, who has grown arrogant.”²² Here Boṣrah (Isaiah 63:1) is a city in Edom, hence a symbol for Christians, while Babylon, which is identified with Baghdad, stands for Muslims. The combinations of biblical types found in these poems are innumerable, and are dictated by the context that the poem aims to translate, by the historical circumstances of the poet’s own time, and by the strictures of meter and rhyme.²³

Poems of national lament, part of the payyetanic tradition, reached to their greatest expression among the poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, among them, Solomon ibn Gabirol. Many of Ibn Gabirol’s poems stage a dialogue between God and the community of Israel. The following is a good example:

Captive, miserable, in a foreign land,
Taken as maidservant for an Egyptian maid,
Since the day you left her she looks [to You].
Make her deportees return, You, who are mighty in deed!
May the decimated people become a world power again.
Fast, quick as a flash, bring her good news through Elijah.
Rejoice, daughter of Zion, our Messiah has come.
Why would You utterly forget us?

All things have their limit, but my misery has no end.
My years have vanished, yet my wound has not healed.
Sunk in mud, I have dwelt in exile.

With no captain to guide the boat.
 For how long, oh God, will you delay my appointed time?
 When will the song of the turtledove be heard in my land?
 Your name is attached to us. Do not forsake us!

Wounded and oppressed, bearing a heavy burden
 Spoiled and shorn, trampled upon,
 How long, O God, shall I shout “Violence,”
 As my heart melts with fear?
 We labored for tribute all these years.
 Ishmael as a lion, and Esau²⁴ as a falcon –
 As one releases us, the other grabs us.

Is this the voice of Ariel’s deportees?
 Rejoice and shout for joy, O maiden of Israel
 For the day recorded in the book of Daniel.
 That day, Michael will come,
 And announce on the mountain: “The redeemer will come to Zion.”
 Amen, amen, may the Lord do so.
 Give us joy for as many days as You have afflicted us!²⁵

As in Dunash’s verses, this poem, a *ge’ullah* (“poem of redemption”), typically refers to the Other, Christian, and Muslim together, as a single symbolic unity by means of biblical eponyms. Relevant is the association of Ishmael and Esau – Islam and Christianity – with a lion and a falcon. The use of animal metaphors to characterize the Other is commonly found in the polemical literature and medieval poetry of the three communities, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. This strategy could not be more effective in associating that Other with an image of persecution and cruelty, at the same time emphasizing the destitution and helplessness of the community with which the poet identifies himself.²⁶

While the individual voice of the poet and the plural voice of the community became one in Ibn Capron’s *selīḥah*, this poem of redemption by Ibn Gabirol introduces a feminine collectivity in dialogue with God. Ibn Gabirol comfortably moves back and forth between an individual Maiden of Israel, on the one hand, and the plural constituted by the members of the collectivity she stands for, on the other. Thus, exile is described as Sarah’s unnatural subjection and servitude to Hagar, Abraham’s “Egyptian maid.”²⁷ This metaphorical projection of the biblical relationship between Sarah and Hagar onto the contemporary rapport between Judaism and Islam is widely attested in rabbinic literature and was used by earlier poets in al-Andalus. Its pervasiveness in Ibn Gabirol’s *dīwān* is remarkable. The metaphorical identification that he achieves allows him to associate ideas of mocking and contempt, wounding scorn, illegitimacy and inferior status with the Self. Submission to Muslims (Hagar) is conceived of as the reversal of a former, pristine order, since the only natural submission of

Sarah is to God.²⁸ As expected in liturgical poetry, reference to particular historical events or social conditions under Muslim rule is missing, yet emphasis on images of humiliation, on inferior status, and the payment of taxes hint at the legal status of Jews as *dhimmiṣ* under Islam.

The highly rhetorical, almost cryptic language employed by liturgical poems, coupled with the almost total lack of specific historical reference, raises a question about the social function that the poems' rhetoric serves. Central to the rhetoric of the text is the use of metaphor. Traditionally considered a simple literary device, or stylistic ornament, recent studies have called for a better understanding of metaphor as a matter of thought instead of a matter of language.²⁹ This approach, which emphasizes the creative power of metaphor and its capacity to narrate one experience in terms of another, has become central to scholarly inquiry not only in literary criticism, but also in other fields of human and social sciences. In this regard, when explored within the ritual context to which the poems belong, metaphors perform in ways beyond the symbolic expression of reality. In fact, they have the capacity to actively structure experience.³⁰ This role is not one of representation, but rather of the creation of a new reality.

In his work on symbolic language in the context of ritual, Kenneth Burke eloquently describes identifications as strategies for handling existential moments, the semantic character of rhetorical devices being an intrinsic part of such handling.³¹ Ibn Gabirol builds two hierarchies: the biblical order, which he presents as natural, and the contemporary social order, which he presents as an inversion of the first. Once these parallel worlds are established and contrasted, metaphor facilitates and reclaims social change. In liturgical poetry, this change is conceptualized as *ge'ullah* and understood as retribution and regression to a perfect, natural state of being. In Ibn Gabirol's poem this natural state is paradigmatically represented by Sarah and Hagar.

Examining the role of exile as a literary theme, Robert Edwards suggests that the recreation of fictitious worlds never entails the reversal of exile, but instead results in a deeper alienation.³² In Ibn Gabirol's poem, and in liturgical poetry in a more general sense, alienation means identification of the Self by opposition to the Other, a relationship conceived in terms of superiority and inferiority. The text combats the context by describing this relationship as an inversion of the natural balance of power between the two opposed elements. A stereotype such as "the Egyptian slave" says very little about the group to which it refers, but tells us a great deal about how the poet as an individual and the community in which he includes himself perceive and imagine the Other.

Poetic conventions, the constrictions imposed by the liturgical service in which a given poem is inserted, and the consolatory function the poem serves, allow for little variation in liturgical poetry. This does not imply that poems remain alien to the personal experience of the poet and to historical change. Rather, they register differences in structure, in the community's attitude toward God and in the choice of semantic fields, features that evince a more dynamic relationship between text and context than may be first apparent.

A comparison between the poems surveyed thus far and those written by Levi ibn al-Tabbān, may shed some light on this matter. Ibn al-Tabbān, who lived in the Taifa of Saragossa under the rule of the Banū Hūd in the second half of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, was very much influenced by Ibn Gabirol, who had lived in the same city more than half a century earlier. His poems clearly emerge from a different historical context, however. For example, the following poem encompasses a number of elements pointing to a different relationship between text and context:

The crowds of Akkad and Erekh³³/have weakened me.
They became enraged,/and ruthlessly imposed labor upon my son.

Whom could I tell/of my heart's wound, who would pity [me]?
I am tossed about (Psalms 55:3),/and cannot open my mouth.
I lower my head/and walk bent
While they walk upright, performing their ritual –
This one kneeling in front of his idol/that one praising a false prophet,

While my honorable name/is held in derision within the enemies' mouth.
They say: "Your hope is gone./You have no Redeemer."
Even the servant's son³⁴/retorts from within his court.
He peers through the lattices/as I reach the crossroads,
When he rides with his entourage/I have to pay my respects.³⁵

Dove, I am distressed/that the royal crown
Is trampled by every shoe/and you are dragged along with it.
Your King gave you a cup of staggering/overflowing with wrath.
Your Rock empowered the enemy/and distressed you,
For He was with him/as He pushed you away.

How much longer will you be in exile,/oppressed and silenced?
He will pay for your idleness in poverty/and He will heal [you]!
Rend your mourning garment/and give the Healer what is His.
Praise/God exceedingly! All knees
Kneel before Him./All living souls praise His name.³⁶

The servitude of Israel, her complaint in exile, her longing for redemption, and her self-definition by opposition to a multiple enemy are all typical features in the genre, shared by all the poems surveyed thus far. The structure of the poem as a dialogue is also frequent. This poem, as many others by Ibn al-Tabbān, however, dramatizes in a very distinctive way the status of the community versus the other. While the enemy walks upright or rides, she walks bent in humiliation; while her opponents raise their voice in mocking, she must remain silent or is forced to honor them. While they display their religious ceremony in

public, she is held in derision.³⁷ The first two elements seem in accord with provisions included in Islamic law regarding Jews as well as other religious groups in Muslim territory. Likewise, Andalusī invectives against the Jews point to an absence of humiliation as a factor breaking the status of *dhimma*. In verses six and seven, Muslims and Christians perform their ritual in public and scorn Israel for the delay in the coming of their Messiah. The poem, like others in Ibn al-Tabbān’s *dīwān*, closes by summoning the community to prayer, as praying is the only means left to attain salvation.

The idea of servitude and abasement displayed in the poem is joined by references to cruelty and persecution in several other poems by Ibn al-Tabbān in which references to the Other, while generic, point to Christianity. This is the case in poem 16, a *selīḥah* too long to quote in full, which contains no explicit references to Islam. On account of having abandoned the Torah, Israelites are said to have been “at the head of the deportees,” while “their adversaries ruled and their enemies lived in peace/forcing them [to pay] taxes and hanging their princes, without sparing the elders (Lamentations 5:2).”³⁸ The present is described as “the days of the kingdoms that bite like serpents,” when “men come who take wives from among those that please them,” as “the bravest of men could not lift a hand, but themselves became captives, booty, and spoil.”³⁹ The community “cries for help in the open fields from those who enslave them saying: ‘Strip them, strip them.’”⁴⁰ These graphic images resonate through many of Ibn al-Tabbān’s poems. While references are always to a generic Other, there are some indications in the poems that this other should be identified with Christians rather than with Muslims. It is the Edomites who, upon Jerusalem’s fall, claim: “Strip her, strip her to her very foundations” (Psalms 137:7).⁴¹

The distinctive character of this last *selīḥah*, as well as several other poems by Ibn al-Tabbān, has not gone unnoticed, as Pagis remarks in the introduction to his edition of the *dīwān*.⁴² Attempts have been made to place it in the context of either Alfonso VI’s war against the Almoravids in 1090, or the conquest of the Taifa of Saragossa by Alfonso I of Aragon in 1118. While this association would explain the poet’s description of the exile of his community, as well as many references to the fall of Jerusalem repeatedly found in his poems,⁴³ there is no historical evidence confirming that Ibn Tabbān was still alive at this late date. Acknowledgment of guilt, insistent call on repentance, images of plunder, description of the enemy’s brutality, and the general sense of communal abasement and helplessness, however, do not necessarily need to be explained as *post eventum*, but may also be read as belonging in the increasingly heated political and social turmoil that led to the fall of Saragossa.

In sum, while Ibn Gabirol’s poetry is predominantly characterized by images of Israel abandoned and abased, and God, her Lover, absent, as in secular poems of love and complaint, Ibn al-Tabbān’s poetry stresses the sin of the community. Both poets long for restoration, but while Ibn Gabirol calls for an inversion of the present status, Ibn al-Tabbān calls for fasting, prayer, purification, and

repentance as the only means to attain pardon and rest. The nature of the *ge'ullah* is different as it projects onto the future a contemporary moment that is different. Likewise, the biblical passages and paradigms both poets use also differ.

Interplay between the ideas of collective-national exile and domicile

It goes without saying that the idea of a national exile, the separation from Zion, as well as references to either Muslims and Christians as Israel's enemies, appear overwhelmingly in poetry meant to be part of the liturgical service. However, in al-Andalus and Christian Spain, allusions to this collective exile also occur in secular poetry and occasionally in prose. Some scholars have interpreted this phenomenon as a consequence of the intolerable political and social situation Jewish authors had to endure. But this reading does not take into consideration how reference to the collective exile of Israel is used in a new literary framework. In turning toward this matter, the most notable aspect is the interplay between the notion of *galut* as elaborated in liturgical poetry and the concept of domicile, or sense of belonging in a given place.

Hasdai ibn Shaprut's letter to the Khazar king

Hasdai ibn Shaprut was the first Jew in al-Andalus to have reached a high position in government employ who was named explicitly in the sources.⁴⁴ A letter he sent to the central European king of the Khazars (who supposedly had converted to Judaism, and about whose legendary character much has been written) is crucial for our understanding of the construction of exile in non-liturgical texts. In addressing the Khazar king, Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut begins by describing his community according to the idea of national exile. Hence, his contemporaries are “The exiled Jews of Jerusalem in Spain … those who have wandered, … who had long suffered afflictions and calamities, and see their flags in the land no more, … the remnant of the captive Israelites,”⁴⁵ that is, according to the rhetorical construction of national exile. However, he immediately parallels this description of the community in exile to the conditions of their present existence, their domicile. Thus, he adds: “we are dwelling peacefully in the land of our sojourning” where “the yoke was lightened.”⁴⁶ In Ibn Shaprut’s description, al-Andalus is not “a land of desolation,” as it corresponds to the place of exile.⁴⁷ It is, rather, a “rich land, abounding in rivers, springs and aqueducts; a land of corn, oil and wine, of fruits and all manner of delicacies; it has pleasure-gardens and orchards, and fruitful trees of every kind.”⁴⁸ More than a description, this is almost an evocation, an idealization, something infrequent among the Andalusi Jews, at least in the pre-Almoravid period.

In describing al-Andalus, the individual voice is transformed into the collective voice. Ibn Shaprūṭ speaks of “our land, and our king, who has collected treasures as no king has ever collected.”⁴⁹ As an essential element of this present, he describes the majesty and splendor of ‘Abd al-Rahmān III, whom he refers to as “my Lord the King,” as he does when addressing the Khazar king. Hasdai describes ‘Abd al-Rahmān’s genealogy, his title of *amīr al-mu’minīn* (“the Commander of the Believers”) and his role as the liberator of the Peninsula. He reconstructs the legitimacy of his political power and adds to his name the phrase “May God be propitious to him.”

Ibn Shaprūṭ does not refer to ‘Abd al-Rahmān’s magesty gratuitously. On the contrary, he highlights ‘Abd al-Rahmān’s power because by so doing he reveals his own, as he explicitly acknowledges: “all the mercantile transactions [of ‘Abd al-Rahmān] are placed under my control...; all their gifts pass through my hands.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, he perceives the political power of ‘Abd al-Rahmān as a benefaction from God, and consequently, a benefaction mediated by Ḥasdai himself.⁵¹

Throughout his letter, Ḥasdai invests himself with authority, and this investiture permits that a parallel relationship is not only manifested between ‘Abd al-Rahmān III and the Khazar king, but between the latter and Ḥasdai himself. If at first he indicates that the gifts made to ‘Abd al-Rahmān III pass through his hands, now it is he who of his own resources has sent a diplomatic gift to the Khazar king. Once this parallel is constructed, Ḥasdai reinforces the link between the personal and the collective voices.

Bahya ibn Paqudah’s acknowledgment of good qualities of life in exile

Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ acknowledged that “the yoke [of the national exile] was lightened” and described the peaceful existence of the Jews of Cordova, stressing the privilege of his own position vis-à-vis the Khazar king. Texts describing the healthy status of the Jewish community in their present exile are difficult to find. The following, included in Bahya ibn Paqudah’s treatise on ethics, *Kitāb al-hidāya* (ca. 1080), is a rare exception:

If one of our contemporaries looks for similar miracles now, let him examine objectively our situation among the Gentiles since the beginning of the diaspora and the way our affairs are managed in spite of the differences between us and them both secret and open, which are well known to them. *Let him see that our situation, as far as living and subsistence are concerned, is the same as theirs, or even better, in times of war and civil disturbances. You see how both their leaders and their vulgar peasants toil much more than the middle and lower classes among us, according to our Lord’s promise contained in the Scriptures*.⁵²

At first glance, one cannot help but be struck by Ibn Paqudah's apparently impartial and "objective" description of the social situation of his fellow Jews living under Islamic rule, as he proceeds to acknowledge their sometimes privileged position regarding the lowest groups among the Muslim population. Admittedly, in Ibn Paqudah's time, Saragossa, in the Upper March, was known for its economic prosperity and vibrant intellectual life.⁵³ Sulaymān ibn Hūd al-Muṣṭafīn, who ruled until 1046, and his son Aḥmad ibn Hūd al-Muqtadir, who ruled until 1081, followed in the footsteps of the Tujibīd predecessors in designing a flexible and all-inclusive political model that called for the participation of Christians and Jews.⁵⁴ However, to read this fragment as impartial and objective is insufficient and misleading. This passage is part of a chapter about the gifts God has bestowed on mankind that mentions the supremacy of the Law given to Moses. For Ibn Paqudah, the "situation of the Jewish people among other peoples," the circumstance of their domicile, proves the presence of divine grace among them.

Writing in this way, the author achieves a number of objectives. First, he responds to Muslim polemicists, who use the lack of independence of the Jews as proof that God was capable of changing his mind and was able to take back the favor he conceded to Israel, his chosen people. Significant in this respect is a passage by Ibn Paqudah's contemporary, the polymath Ibn Ḥazm of Cordova, in a polemical treatise allegedly addressed against Samuel Ibn Nagrīla. "God's curse," says Ibn Ḥazm, "has endured among those who belong to the most humiliated and vile community – that is, the Jews. God ... has constantly directed his rage toward those who belong to it."⁵⁵ As is customary among Muslim polemicists, Ibn Ḥazm finds proof for his assertion in biblical passages, such as Deuteronomy 28:15–68,⁵⁶ a long section listing all kinds of misfortunes that would fall upon Israel, should Israel break the covenant. Ibn Paqudah implicitly counters this argument by quoting other biblical passages (Leviticus 26:44, Esdras 9:9, Psalms 124:2–3) where Israel's subjection to the nations goes hand in hand with divine mercy and the keeping of his covenant. Good quality of life is evidence of the continuous presence of God in Jewish history.

In addition to the polemical undertones of this passage, it is also part of a treatise on ethics, directed against the aspirations, intellectual ideals, educational models and social ethics of Jewish courtiers.⁵⁷ With this passage, Ibn Paqudah calls upon this group not to forget that the privileges and benefits they enjoy come ultimately from God.

Finally, this passage allows for a coherent interpretation of the economic and social success of many Jews, in conflict with the images of suffering and humiliation which sustained the symbolic interpretation of the world in other genres, namely liturgical poetry. This framework of symbolic perception forms the collective memory of the community and its ways of portraying itself. It has to be noted, though, that Ibn Paqudah distinguishes carefully from the Other when he writes, "in spite of the differences between us and them, both secret and open, which are well known to them."

Ibn Paqudah's attitudes can only be explained in terms of his historical context, which was characterized by favorable social and political settings. Interestingly, there is evidence that shows that a change of those conditions forced changes in the text. The celebrated scholar Judah ibn Tibbon, who translated Ibn Paqudah's work about half a century later in Provence,⁵⁸ omitted half the passage (the section between the asterisks, above). In the period between both authors, the situation of Jews living in Islamic territories had declined to the extent that most of the communities established in al-Andalus and the North of Africa had been brought to ruin under the rule of the Almohads. Moreover, in these years, many texts had been produced which accounted for these dramatic changes. In Ibn Tibbon's time, Ibn Paqudah's statement could not possibly be sustained without editing.

Although changes in the context cannot be ignored, as they lead to changes in the concepts of exile and domicile, the broader textual context in which the passage under analysis belongs cannot be overlooked either. To this effect, comparison of Ibn Paqudah's comments on the social and political situation of his time with a second passage in the same work, *Kitāb al-hidāya*, is most illustrative. This second passage reads as follows:

Because of our sins, our Sanctuary is desolate, our splendor is departed, our glorious House has been burned by fire, and it is not proper for us to offer incense before You or burnt-offering on Your altar, in a strange land. But true sacrifice, to You, is a broken spirit' a heart broken and crushed, O God, You will not scorn. Bring good in Your favor to Zion; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then You will want righteous offerings, burnt- and whole-offerings. Then will bulls be offered on Your altar (Psalms 51:18–19).⁵⁹

At first glance, this text seems to be in contradiction with the previous one. Whereas Ibn Paqudah refers to the human condition in general across his book, here he writes of a strange land, asks for the restoration of Zion, and alludes to the punishment of Israel. This paradox is not resolved if one overlooks the genre in which is inserted – a *baqqashah*, or supplication to God, typical of a liturgical setting. Unlike the rest of the book, this text is written in Hebrew, abounds in biblical quotations, and displays a different intention than that of the surrounding material. It must be emphasized that both texts do not conflict with each other and, in fact, reading one on the basis of the other, or presuming that the first reproduces reality better than the second, would be a mistake. Both construct the community's identity in the same measure and in order to do so the author uses different style, language, and narrative strategy.

Secular poetry

A unique construction of the Other as enemy in secular poetry is attested in Samuel ibn Nagrīlah's much-studied forty-one war poems included in *Ben*

Tehillim (“Son of Psalms”), the first part of his tripartite *dīwān*. The wealth of scholarly attention these poems have been given is hardly surprising, as they provide an unparalleled example that can further our understanding of the interaction between Arabic and Hebrew literatures, and between the text and its context.⁶⁰ Despite all the attention, the reader’s awe for the poet’s ability to make the polythematic *qaṣīda* of Arabic tradition his own is not diminished. The flexibility of the *qaṣīda* structure and the regularity of its conventions allow him to transform an actual military episode between two neighboring Taifas, in which the Nagid acts in some leading position at the head of Granada’s army, into an epic battle with biblical undertones. The description of the battle itself is merely one piece in a poetic puzzle where all sections and themes are carefully selected and combined and all serve an ultimate goal – God’s praise, and also the poet’s.

Among the war poems, some are short compositions on a specific circumstance surrounding the poet’s participation in battle. Most of them, however, follow the typically tripartite structure of the Arabic *qaṣīda*, with a central section describing the battle, framed by an introduction and a conclusion.⁶¹ Among the most elaborate examples are a *shirah* (“song”) written upon the battle of al-Funt against Almería in 1038 and a *tehillah* (“praise”) written in the following year on the occasion of a battle against Seville. As has been often noted, both compositions have 149 verses each, as many as the number of Psalms.⁶² Although the themes of introduction and conclusion vary from poem to poem, a number of thematic elements and poetic devices recur. Hence, it is common for the introduction to include an invocation, or praise, to God, whose protection in combat the poet requests, or whose deeds he extols.⁶³ Worth noting as well is the fact that, in his request, the poet alternates between the individual and the collective identity. While he addresses God as an individual, and asks for his favor, he recalls God’s protection over the patriarchs in biblical times.⁶⁴

Also common in the introduction is a depiction of the causes of the present conflict. Ibn Nagrīlah presents the battle, first, as the result of a personal attack against him and ultimately, inasmuch as the attack is due to his condition as *dhimmī*, as an attack against the Jewish community, playing once again on the individual and the collective voices. Thus, he states regarding Ibn ‘Abbās, vizier of the Slav king Zuhayr, in the Taifa of Almeria, his battlefield opponent: “He did not intend only to destroy me/with the calumny he made up and forged. // He was rather trying to annihilate God’s community – the Remnant and the offspring, birthing and pregnant women alike.”⁶⁵

By invoking God’s protection and by linking his fate with that of his community, the poet is setting the stage for the battle about to take place. The personal, literary conflict Ibn Nagrīlah described between himself and his opponent reads in several poems as an opposition between a biblical hero and one of Israel’s enemies. The military episode involving the army of Granada and that of a bordering Taifa, such as Seville, Carmona, or Almería, becomes a biblical war.

Different components in the opposing army, such as Arabs, Berbers, Slaves, and Christian mercenaries, are typologically named after biblical enemies of Israel.⁶⁶ Together they form a multiple Other, united in a common effort to annihilate Israel. In contrast, the also ethnically diverse army of Granada is reduced to a unified Israel, under the leadership of the Nagid. Whereas ethnic identity is said to be a subjective category that either individuals or groups use to identify themselves and others within specific situations – most often for political reasons⁶⁷ – Ibn Nagrīlah emphasizes the plural ethnic identity of the opponent, which he reads in a biblical code, and totally erases the ethnicity of his own army. To the idea of a multiple, ancestral Other some poems add that of a religious Other, the uncircumcised or idol-worshipping.⁶⁸ This literary portrayal of Self and Other is the central piece in a poetic master plan in which every element from the historical context is utilized to build imagined communities.

Ibn Nagrīlah's intricate literary construction of reality reaches a culmination in the final section of the poem. Here, the poet describes the victory over the enemy. This victory is conceived as the reversal of the relationship with the enemy, and also as the redemption of his own soul, a redemption extended to the whole Jewish community. By identifying the victory with the final redemption of Israel, the Nagid himself becomes a quasi-messianic figure, his people's liberator. His self-identification as a Levite, a member of the house of David, defines both his military heroism and his role in memorializing the victory.⁶⁹

As is the norm in the classic polythematic *qaṣīda*, the final section in Ibn Nagrīlah's long war poems includes praise of the poem itself. In its totality, the poem, described with religious connotations and equated on occasion to a sacred object, performs a double function: remembrance and commemoration. Hence, the events are to be remembered in a festival, like Purim or Sukkot, commemorating the liberation from ancestral enemies.⁷⁰

Describing the Other as enemy, assigning the enemy biblical names, reading the present through biblical typologies, calling for God's help against Israel's enemies, and yearning for a redemption perceived as imminent, are all features commonly found in liturgical poetry, but are rare in secular poems. It is the function of liturgical poetry, rather than secular, to remember and commemorate a shared, collective history, understood as cyclical because of its continuous annual commemoration in the liturgical year. All of these elements have a place in Ibn Nagrīlah's poems when linked to a further goal to which the poems aspire – that of propaganda and self-glorification. By turning his participation alongside the army of Granada against a second Taifa into a victory of biblical proportions, Ibn Nagrīlah symbolically validates his indisputable leadership of an imagined universal Jewish community, far beyond the borders of al-Andalus. By making this role known, the poem becomes an instrument in asserting, consolidating and publicizing Ibn Nagrīlah's power. In sum, by importing a certain representation of Self and Other typical of a liturgical context, Ibn Nagrīlah's war poems contribute to the poet's self-praise in a secular context, as was the case in Ibn Shaprūṭ's letter to the Khazar king. Thus, Ibn Nagrīlah builds up the

concept of domicile by elaborating on the theme of exile within a secular framework.

A similar transposition of representations of Self and Other from liturgical to secular poetry takes place in panegyrics, poems in praise of a friend or a benefactor whose protection the poet celebrates.⁷¹ The portrayal of the benefactor, as well as the description of his relationship with the poet, often follow standardized and conventional patterns of representation. Among these patterns, and very prominently, one finds the link between protector and protégé presented as the relationship between God and the people of Israel, a representation that is constructed using images commonly found in liturgical poetry. Hence, a personal, individual situation, in which the poet finds himself wandering at the mercy of Fate (as both Muslims and Jewish itinerant poets often described themselves), comes to be constructed with images describing the collective exile of Israel. Thereby, the suffering of the poet and his hope for aid become the messianic hope of the community, the patron is described as his Savior, assuming functions that liturgical poetry assigns to God, and the economic reward to which the poet aspires is defined in terms of redemption.

This strategy can be traced in the work of the first generations of Andalusí Jewish poets, such as Ibn Khalfun, an itinerant poet who appears to have made a living writing poetry for friends and patrons.⁷² Among the many examples from his *dīwān*, the poem *nemugoti be-darki ha-resha'ah*, serves to illustrate this use of exile. The poem, addressed to his friend and patron Samuel ibn Nagrīlah, opens with a long section (*nasīb*, verses 1–42) where the poet describes his errant life, and in doing so substitutes the conventional Arabic model of poetry of separation, which he uses in some other poems, for a section describing how, as a result of sin, he was delivered into the hands of four beasts, and how he suffered torment at the hands of the last of them, which he identifies with Islam.

I am wasted away because of my evil ways [Isaiah 64:6]

I have been given over to a terrible transgression [*peshi'ah*],
put in the hands of my sin (*het'*). Here I am,

Like prey in the hands of four beasts [Ezekiel 1:6],
One skins, the second crushes the bones,

The third tears to pieces, the last gulps down.
I am crushed in the hand of the last one

That it wounds me like a stake.

It turned my calm into anguish,
And tore my wellness to shreds.

It changed my honor into shame,
My kingdom and sovereignty into servitude,
The splendor of my face into pallor, my strength
Into decay, my security into fear.

From enduring so many grievances,
From bearing such a heavy burden, I am exhausted.

My soul writhes, my heart
 Is wounded, all my strength has been cut off.
 The cover is too narrow for curling up [Isaiah 28:20]
 And my garment too short [to cover me].
 The staff of bread has been broken, vanished is
 The happiness of the heart. The music has stopped.
We are full of concerns.
*Sadness has rooted inside us.*⁷³

The visions of Daniel referring to the subjugation of Israel at the hands of other nations were common in liturgical poetry but rare in secular poems.⁷⁴ From an idealized past, described in terms of peace, well-being, glory, sovereignty and strength, the poet sees himself reduced to uneasiness, servitude and decay, a burden which he feels unable to bear and from which he begs the Nagid for redemption. In this first section Ibn Khalfun conveys the relationship between poet and patron in terms of the relationship between the people of Israel and God, and thus he alternates his use of the first person with a collective voice. After this first introductory section he addresses his protector, Ibn Nagrīlah as the prince of Levi and of the community, commissioned by God from among the most noble of the Remnant of Israel. In the second section of the poem, the *madīḥ*, or panegyric proper, the poet causes his addressee to take on the role of God, providing redemption, liberating, and ending the oppression which the poet had described in the previous verses.⁷⁵

It is significant that in his response to the poem, Ibn Nagrīlah understands the passage about the collective exile of Israel, in Ibn Khalfun's poem, in utterly individual terms, and attributes the poet's misfortunes to Time and to the lack of prosperity of the age. In short, Ibn Nagrīlah recognizes Ibn Khalfun's rhetorical use of the concept of exile.

You named “your Time” (*zeman*) “sin and blame” (*het’ we-awon*),
 Turning the name of “the Days” (*yamim*) into “transgressions” (*peshā’im*).

Many are the innocent and pure
 Who are dispossessed, as you are...
 May I be an alien to Kehat if I do not
 Make wicked Time your slave!
 May I be a stranger for Merari if
 [I let] Time rule over my friends while I have goods.⁷⁶

The Nagid does not make any reference to terms concerning the collective, nor does he refer to the exile of Israel, nor to the Jewish-Gentile opposition.⁷⁷ Moreover, he understands redemption as a monetary reward. With his material support, the Nagid compensates for the state of decay, servitude and subjection to Islam to which Ibn Khalfun refers.

Ibn Khalfun is by no means alone in using this paradigm. The eleventh-century poet Ibn Gabirol – who, like Ibn Khalfun, had to rely on patrons’ generosity – often refers to the collective exile of Israel when describing the dependent relationship created between poet and addressee. Thus, in one of his poems, written in praise of a certain Jacob,⁷⁸ Ibn Gabirol describes himself as subject to cruel tests of destiny and misfortune. He attacks rival poets and ridicules their foolishness, mediocrity, and lack of talent (verses 1–24). The confrontation with his opponents takes place on a strictly personal level, and the intervention of the patron is solicited as mediator (beginning in verse 25), but the patron’s intervention is not described in personal terms, rather in collective ones. The relationship between Ibn Gabirol and the rival poets is now transformed: the benefactor becomes the “most noble of the Remnant” whom God chose “to make Jacob return to Him,” and “to reunite the dispersed.” The patron is chosen by God, and at the same time assumes His functions – he heals, he re-establishes “the ancient possessions,” he opposes the enemies of His people and redeems them from their yoke, returning them to their natural state. This poem is not really about a conflict between Jews and the Other in which the patron acts in favor of the former, but rather about a personal confrontation, motivated by poetic rivalry, between the poet and his (Jewish) competitors. Nevertheless, this rivalry comes to be conveyed in one section of the poem as an opposition between Jews and Gentiles.

The poems by Ibn Khalfun and Ibn Gabirol demonstrate an intimate relationship between the construction of personal and collective identities. Each author describes his personal situation – his own exile, forced upon him by circumstances and by the instability of the age, a condition about which Arab poets also complain. In both authors, this individual experience is expressed at times by the symbolic framework of the collective exile of Israel, although the redemption that is called for is understood as an improvement of the poet’s status and of his position at court, in other words, in material terms. Ibn Gabirol masterfully expresses this idea in one of his verses, where he says that when the prince to whom he addresses his poems protects them, it is “as if they were not in exile.”⁷⁹ It should not be forgotten, though, that the panegyrist is not merely an individual but rather a representative of the community, and his poem is, at the same time, an act of collective reaffirmation of loyalty toward the benefactor. It acts as a reminder of the social values that the protector should defend. Once again, the paradigm concerning exile is used to strengthen and defend one of the most important structures of domicile – that of the Jewish courtier in the Muslim courts. The reproduction of the opposing pair Jew/Gentile as it appears in liturgical poetry helps in the creation and reaffirmation of the identity of the Jewish minority in opposition to the Muslim majority.

Conflict between the idea of a collective-national exile and the idea of domicile

Until this point, representations of exile and domicile have been used to define each other, or have been maintained separate in different literary genres. Explicit conflict between them, however, surfaces in a few secular poems written in al-Andalus. Representative among them is Dunash ben Labrat's well known *We-omer al-tishan*. The first nine verses in the poem indulge in a description of lavish pleasures and in an account of all sorts of sensory delights; a second poetic voice in verse 10 brings to an end the revelry by recalling the circumstances of exile. Raymond Scheindlin, who edited, translated and commented upon the poem in *Wine, Women and Death*, argues that the structure of the poem follows a rhetorical strategy pervasive in Arabic and Greek, as well as in Hebrew poetry, consisting of the simultaneous defense and attack of a single proposition. Furthermore, Scheindlin interprets this rhetoric as having been used to express a national dilemma, namely, whether or not indulging in pleasure was legitimate in exile.⁸⁰ Along the same lines, Ross Brann reads the poem as a case in point of the ambivalence inherent to the Andalusi Jewish subculture.⁸¹

Ben Labraṭ's poem is not unique. A few other examples are found in Samuel ibn Nagrīlah's *Ben Tehillim* that account for a similar conflict. In one of them, he answers those who have reproached him for his position at the Zirid court of Granada by saying:

He disputes my alliance with kings.
 This, I say, is my lot and inheritance.
 He fears the face of their wrath.
 My refuge and hope, I respond, is in God.
 "What are battles to you?" he asks,
 And I answer: "The place of my death
 And burial is set, and the Lord who sent me
 Seraphs in a dream will save me.
 If I were rotting away with sin could I stop it?
 My books hold my destiny...
 Leave off me now – maybe I'd spend my days in prosperity,
 A turban above me; I'd drink still water
 From my well in the cup of deliverance –
 And running water drawn from my river.
 Is it right to despise my inheritance,
 And not rejoice in my portion and fate?"⁸²

When Ibn Nagrīlah wrote this poem his political career was at its climax. Under the only authority of Bādīs, the Berber ruler of the kingdom of Granada, he held an important political and military position, which raised suspicion not only

among Muslims, but also among fellow Jews. His perception of the link between his individual and the collective fate is obvious, yet unstated. Although Ibn Nagrīlah speaks in the first person, his opponent worries about the consequences for the community as a whole.⁸³ The Nagid justifies his position, as well as the wealth and prestige that it entails, by arguing that it is a gift bestowed by God, that is, legitimizing it from a theological point of view. His arguments reflect the generally positive attitude of Jewish courtiers both in al-Andalus and in Christian Spain toward their involvement in non-Jewish courts. While the panegyrics legitimize the figure of the court rabbi, ascribing to him the protection of the Remnant of Israel in exile and attributing to him the capacity for redemption, the Nagid himself denies that the material conditions inherent in that position in any way contradict his identity and that of his group, and he attributes them to divine favor.

From al-Andalus to the Hispanic kingdoms

The present as a time of collective-national exile

A generation after Levi ibn al-Tabbān, Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ carried on the Andalusi tradition of liturgical poetry in Northern Spain. A student of Isaac ibn Ghayyat at Lucena, Ibn ‘Ezra’ followed in his teacher’s steps and those of the preceding generation, distinguishing himself by his predilection for *selihot* and by a group of *ahavot* and *ge’ullot* describing the relationship between God and Israel. His use of the theme of exile and the construction of the enemy of Israel in exile echoes Ibn Gabirol and Ibn al-Tabbān’s poems. The following is a *selihah* written for Yom Kippur by Ibn ‘Ezra’:

I called [to the Lord]/to find relief in my affliction.
 I cried out in the assembly/seeking a place for me to rest.
 I lifted up my soul/for atonement and pardon
 As I might propitiate Him/[sending] a gift in advance (Genesis 32:21).

My intense grief/weakened me.
 I did not find rest/for my feet in exile.
 From the slavery of my sin,/tell me: “You are free.”
 Forgive my congregation./Grant your servant success! (Nehemiah 1:11).

The one who dwells in exile, awake!/His sleep has been too long,
 [Spent] in hard labor in the hands of Se’ir⁸⁴/and Ishmael.
 When will the elder and the maidservant’s son/serve the younger [brother]?⁸⁵
 When will You take one from a town/and two from a clan (Jeremiah 3:14)?

You, who understand [man’s] thought,/and what it conceals,
 Forgive he who is a slave/to his sin and sorrow.

Pay heed to the plea of a soul, that suffers/because of its sins.
May your right hand come forward/as the left stays behind (*Sanhedrin* 107).⁸⁶

The preceding poem, on the national exile of Israel and Israel's existence in *galut*, is representative of Ibn 'Ezra's liturgical poetry. Generic references to a dual Other – here Se'ir and Ishmael; in many other poems Edom and Arav, Edom and Ishmael, etc. – are the norm in most of Ibn Ezra's liturgical poems.⁸⁷ But what is most striking in Ibn 'Ezra's liturgical poetry is not the elements present in the poems, but rather those which are absent. As noted, his liturgical poems lack references to the land of Israel, as well as historical typologies explaining present experience.⁸⁸ Instead, Ibn 'Ezra' emphasizes contrition, prayer and supplication to God as only means to gain His favor. In every other way, Ibn 'Ezra' is faithful to the preceding tradition, and does not depart from it in any significant way.

About fifteen years younger than Moses ibn 'Ezra', Judah Halevi⁸⁹ described the same historical context in more dramatic terms. In this regard, the following poem stands in vivid contrast to the preceding one:

My Lord, a time of affliction forced me/to live between a scorpion and a viper.
[Here] in my prison,/ pity me, pity me!

My soul despairs from [seeing] the break of dawn,
Of waiting day after day.
Ah – My Lord – What can I say, after

Edom occupied my palace,/Arav ruled, and Esau
subdued me/with sheepdogs.

My name, which was [meant for] music,
Has been turned, in the enemies' mouths, into scorn.
They boast against me on account of some delusion.

Hagarites, Moabites and Ammonites/Mock the holy beings' words⁹⁰
And make me bow/before false prophets.

My love, come to walk the gardens,
Pick nards and lilies.
For how long will the gazelle remain among jackals?

Arise to [the sound of] the harp and the bell./Yearn for spiced wine and
pomegranate juice.
Make the Gazelle⁹¹ return/to my dwelling.

Be ready for the appointed time, though it delays.

I did not exchange you for another nation.
You chose me and I also choose you.

Is there a nation Northward or Southward/Like my son, bound for sacrifice,
first fruit of my vigor,
My beloved?/Is there any god like Me?⁹²

Several elements in the preceding *ahavah* (“love poem”) clearly differ from Ibn ‘Ezra’s generic descriptions. As many others in Halevi’s *dīwān*, this poem conveys a sense of desperation caused by the delay of final redemption. Exile is thus described as a long night, and redemption as dawn. Admittedly, longing for redemption is constant in all liturgical poetry, and the image of redemption as dawn had already been used by other poets such as Ibn Gabirol, but never with the anguish and the sense of urgency apparent in Halevi’s poems.

Following liturgical poetic conventions, Christians and Muslims are identified with biblical types, and are metaphorically described as wild animals pursuing Israel. Predictably, they are said to share a common desire to destroy Israel. Halevi’s poems, however, often portray the Other as a religious other in very graphic terms. Hence, verse 13 portrays Hagarites, Moabites, and Ammonites as forcing him to “bow before false prophets,” in clear allusion to Islam. Likewise, Christians are described in other poems as “those who worship graven images.”⁹³ The almost inextricable duality Islam–Christianity is disentangled. As Muslims are misguided in following Muḥammad, Christians are clearly portrayed as worshippers of idols. Their common attitude toward Israel is oppression, but more prominently derision and scorn. Both Ibn Gabirol and Ibn al-Tabbān had emphasized the mockery inflicted upon Israel. In Ibn Gabirol this mockery translated into an inversion of Israel’s proper status. In Ibn al-Tabbān it took the form of public humiliation.⁹⁴ Halevi refers to the Other’s contempt for Israel caused by the delay of the long-expected redemption. Moreover, he makes clear that this delay is used as evidence by the enemy to corroborate the inherently false character of biblical prophecy.⁹⁵

God’s response in the final verses of the poem is the poet’s guarantee that His covenant with Israel has not been broken. This answer needs to be considered against a polemical backdrop, where both Christians and Muslims argued for the broken pact between God and Israel. Christians claimed to be the new and true Israel, while Muslims maintained that the Scriptures as well as the covenant had been abrogated.⁹⁶ The poem under analysis highlights the intimate relationship between Israel and God. Many other liturgical poems by Halevi further elaborate the same idea, lamenting the fact that Israel has been tempted and seduced by other gods and emphasizing that she has not failed in remaining faithful to her God. Referring to Israel, Halevi says: “Strangers seduce her with other gods/but she secretly cries for the partner of her youth./She keeps looking at her first husband/while Dishan and Dishon’s sons talk flattery to her.”⁹⁷ Later in the poem seduction becomes abuse, as the poet says: “Delicate girls were taken

away from the cities, into exile,/from fresh beds and quiet resting places./They were dispersed among a people with no understanding, who stammered and spoke foreign tongues,/but they kept the faith in which they believed/and refused to worship idols.”⁹⁸ In these last few verses Halevi describes exile and Other first in terms of language, then in religious terms.

One more element in Halevi’s poem demands attention. By the end of the poem, the relationship between Abraham and Isaac is typologically employed to describe the link between God and Israel. Moreover, Israel becomes a sacrificial victim. This idea finds an echo in a few other liturgical poems. Prominent among these is *me-az me’on ha-ahavah hayyita*,⁹⁹ well-known among Halevi’s liturgical compositions as it has been shown to be a translation of an Arabic poem by the ‘Abbasid Sufi poet Abū l-Shīṣ.¹⁰⁰ Scholars agree in observing an exceptional attitude toward the Other in these poems that differs from that of all previous authors. When he wrote “I love my foes, for they learned wrath from You, for they pursue a body you have slain”¹⁰¹ Halevi indicates his advocacy for martyrdom. Love of the enemy and self-deprecation are attitudes unique to Halevi’s liturgical poetry. His references to martyrdom are in complete accord with the atmosphere of religious polemics that he describes in many of his poems and may be the product of multiple influences – Christian, Islamic, and Jewish.¹⁰² Halevi’s theoretical consideration of exile in the *Kuzari* entailed a positive view of it as it allowed for dissemination of Judaism among the nations.¹⁰³ This positive interpretation of *galut* does not manifest itself in his poetry.

A description of national exile strikingly similar to that of Halevi’s poems is to be found in the liturgical poetry written by his younger contemporary, Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ (1089–1164). The poem *yeya etnappel*, for example, includes most of the elements I have referred to when commenting upon the last poem analyzed, by Halevi – the End has been delayed, the enemy beats Israel and forces the Jews to convert on the account that God has forgotten them. Addressing God, Ibn ‘Ezra’ says: “Your son, the Land spewed out; the enemy beat him./In the furnace of affliction he destroyed him and began to seduce him/With smooth talk so that he converted.”¹⁰⁴ A few verses later the poet adds: “Could the eye turn away from such things without being ashamed/having to face the wicked who vaunt idols/And turn to magicians and soothsayers,/Augurs and sorcerers?/As for me, I look to the Lord!”¹⁰⁵

Exile from al-Andalus: the nostalgia of Andalusi Jews

While descriptions reflecting the good quality of life in exile are practically absent in al-Andalus, with the transition toward Christian Spain, a sense of nostalgia surfaces among Andalusi Jewish authors forced to migrate. Nostalgia for al-Andalus is manifest in Abraham ibn Daud’s chronicle, *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, written in 1160–61, and a well-known feature in Moses ibn ‘Ezra’’s secular poems. Both Ibn Daud and Ibn ‘Ezra’ create a sense of identity

between the Jewish and Muslim elites that had only sporadically been registered in Jewish literature prior to this date. Ibn Daud's chronicle provides an illustrative example. In describing the dispute that erupted in al-Andalus upon the death of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūṭ between the two candidates to the rabbinate, R. Ḥanokh and R. Joseph b. R. Isaac b. Shatnash (surnamed Ibn Abitur) Ibn Daud reports:

Every day there used to go out of Cordova to the city of Zahra seven hundred Jews in seven hundred carriages, each of them attired in royal garb and wearing the headdress of Muslim officials, all of them escorting the Rabbi. A second faction would escort Ibn Shatnash. Finally, the party of the Rabbi gained the upper hand, excommunicated Ibn Shatnash and banned him. At that point the King said to him: "If the Muslims were to reject me in the way the Jews have done to you, I would go into exile. Now you betake yourself into exile!"¹⁰⁶

Reference to attire as a visual symbol of status was common in biographies and chronicles written by Muslims.¹⁰⁷ This passage has a similar intent. It has to be noted, however, that dressing in royal garb and wearing the typical headdress of Muslim officials, in addition to riding carriages, all went against provisions established for *dhimmīs* in Islamic law.¹⁰⁸ In fact, polemical or legal Islamic literature stresses the need for separation between Muslims and *dhimmīs*¹⁰⁹ – blurring of this distinction is interpreted as a potential threat and condemned in Islamic sources. In contrast, Ibn Daud, who wrote from Christian Spain, did not allude to the *dhimma* status. Moreover, he refers to similarities in dress between Jews and Muslims in order to highlight the political position of early Andalusi rabbis.

Other passages in the *Sefer ha-qabbalah* convey the same idea. When Rabbi Ḥanokh reveals himself as an authority in Jewish law, the community "assigned him with costly garments and a carriage."¹¹⁰ Similarly, when Ibn Abī ‘Āmir (ca. 938–1002) appoints Jacob ibn Jau, supporter of Ibn Shatnash, as main representative of the Jewish communities in al-Andalus and North Africa, Ibn Daud remarks: "He placed at his disposal eighteen of his eunuchs clad in uniform, who conducted him in the carriage of a viceregent."¹¹¹ Furthermore, in the aforementioned passage, the "King"¹¹² aligns himself with Rabbi Ḥanokh's son against Ibn Shatnash, and endorses his position, creating again a sense of solidarity between the Muslim and Jewish elites.¹¹³ The Other, with which the Self identifies, sanctions and approves aspects of the latter's identity.

Ibn Daud does not transmit any negative characterization of Muslims, to which he always refers as Ishmaelites, in neutral terms. He describes the *fitna* that took place upon the disintegration of the Caliphate as political turmoil, and, in describing the misfortune that befell the community of Granada in the time of

Joseph ha-Nagid, he seems to blame Joseph himself for it. In his account, the only historical event to which he refers involving direct persecution against the Jews is the Almohad period, which he describes as a time of utter destruction that has come in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies.

As for Moses ibn 'Ezra', many of his secular poems relate to the displacement of Jewish communities toward Christian lands upon the arrival of the Almoravids. The poet describes himself on foreign ground, in exile from "his home." Distance and loss lead him to evoke al-Andalus, a place he describes as the homeland for which he longs and to which he hopes to return. "I spent in the most pleasant of lands," he says, "the days of my life,/satiated with the nectar of love and drunk with the wine of youth." Compared to al-Andalus, Christian Spain becomes "a desert of wild asses," the place of exile.¹¹⁴

Ibn 'Ezra's alienation is related to time as much as it is related to place.¹¹⁵ He conceives of the present as an inversion, a negation and a loss of the past.¹¹⁶ Thereby, he describes his existence as "the days of my exile" as opposed to "the days of my youth" or "the days of my life." Exile becomes in his secular poetry old age and death, absence of pleasure and inability to regain it.

A third element comes to define Ibn 'Ezra's sense of exile: that of being intellectually uprooted. He identifies himself with his intellectual peers, "the nobles of the West," those who share his same Andalusi cultural upbringing, against the lack of education of those who surround him. His is an intellectual exile, in which redemption implies "returning to live under the protection of friends."¹¹⁷

While in his liturgical poems Ibn 'Ezra' longs for Zion, in his secular poetry he longs for Granada, where he eventually returns in his dreams. Although separated by genre, these two senses of longing are not mutually exclusive. Ibn 'Ezra' describes his exile from Granada in secular poetry through biblical references and images commonly used to characterize the communal exile from Zion. Thus, he describes his separation from al-Andalus with biblical images retelling the destruction and exile of the nation, such as Psalms 137:5, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither."¹¹⁸ He evokes Granada with expressions such as "the most pleasant of lands,"¹¹⁹ and "the river of Thy pleasures,"¹²⁰ which the book of Psalms (26:9) reserves for Jerusalem. Finally, he understands redemption as a return to Granada (Hadar Rimmon), as the following lines evince:

If God would let me return to Hadar
 Rimmon (Granada), how pleasant my path would be!
 I would drink and sate with the water of the Shenir (Genil)
 Pure, even when the delightful streams (Psalms 36:9) come turbid.
 A land where my life was sweet
 And Time gracious to me.
 I will await God as nothing prevents him from announcing
 Liberation and freedom to him whom Separation made prisoner.¹²¹

In these examples, the poet uses images of the collective exile of Israel to evoke al-Andalus as domicile. Thereby, he reinforces the idea of its loss and strengthens the intimate link which ties him to the land in which he was born. Ibn ‘Ezra’s poetry reflects, first and foremost, his experience as an individual, but also mirrors the entire experience of the community in which he belongs. While his predecessors Ibn Nagrīlah, Ibn Khalfun, and Ibn Gabirol linked personal and collective experiences to construct a fictitious antagonism between Jews and gentiles in secular poetry, Ibn ‘Ezra’ does not use this opposition, nor does he characterize the Muslims as oppressors and enemies of Israel. Instead, he creates an opposition between the Andalusi Jews and the Jews of Christian Spain. Time, which Ibn ‘Ezra’ claims to have been his servant in the past, enslaves him now, taking over all of the attributes played by the Other. Time attacks, causes physical decay, and destroys the Remnant of Israel. “Certainly,” says Ibn ‘Ezra’, “Time has proposed to exterminate the Remnant of the children of my father and has accomplished a prodigious vengeance in me.”¹²² Likewise, in another poem, in reference to his family and that of the Nagid, he writes: “The Days oppress/like enemies and rise up/to bring forward arguments/and ruthless words. // Against a house of kings,/against the seed of princes/they have schemed quarrels,/fights and strife, // in order to exterminate the remnant/of their children and strip them/from their ornament, leaving them/like a broken wall.”¹²³ In Ibn ‘Ezra’s secular poems, Muslims cannot play the role of oppressors, as the poet identifies culturally with them. Following conventions of Arabic poetry, a personified Time, presented as synonymous with Fate, here exhibits the hostile attitudes and behaviors that are associated elsewhere with the Gentiles.¹²⁴

While for poets writing in al-Andalus the primary means of identification were religious, Ibn ‘Ezra’ understands identity in cultural terms. Recent studies have convincingly demonstrated that when geographical dislocation and political change take place, culture may have more influence than religious affiliation in the process of constructing identity.¹²⁵ Moreover, it is worth observing that a similar phenomenon was concurrently taking place among Andalusi Muslims. While in pre-Almoravid times, identity was established among Andalusi Muslims on religious grounds – Muslims as opposed to *dhimmīs* – upon the Almoravids’ arrival, poets and scholars perceived difference as an opposition between Almoravids (a tribal nomadic society) and Andalusis.¹²⁶ Thus, the twelfth-century Andalusi Muslim poet Ibn Quzmañ (d. 1160) wrote *zajals* in which he mocked and ridiculed the hypocrisy of the Almoravid jurists, symbols of the new Islamic orthodoxy, who tried to control cultural life in al-Andalus. At about the same time, al-Saraquṣṭī (d. 1143) described in one of the *maqāmāt* included in his collection *Al-Makāmāt al-Luzūmiyyā* the cultural contrast dominant at least in early Almoravid times. He wrote:

There [in the land of Tangier] I stayed among a people like cattle and ostriches, and humans like wolves or hyenas, whose speech I could not understand, and with whose minds my own did not agree. I differed

from those people in the manner of my dress and speech.... Hence, after speaking, I became dumb, and after neighing, I became satisfied with the clatter of bells,¹²⁷ as though I were in the company of cattle.... I had heard of the land of al-Andalus, and of its culture, its festivities, and its refinement, and I had come to long for it with the long of a passionate lover, and would have given old and valuable possessions in exchange for it. The qualities I observed in its inhabitants used to delight me, and the virtues I came to expect from its best and finest citizens used to please me.¹²⁸

Coming back to Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, his longing for Granada is a poetical construction based upon historical events relating the arrival of the Almoravids to al-Andalus. Few other authors parallel Ibn ‘Ezra’ in referring to historical events in their poetry. Worth noting among them is Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’, who wrote a well known elegy on the destruction of the Jewish communities in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa in Almohad times, entitled *Ahah, yarad ‘al Sefarad*.¹²⁹

Conflict: Halevi’s late poems

Halevi’s perception and literary representation of life in exile changed a great deal throughout his lifetime. In poems written from al-Andalus after Moses ibn ‘Ezra’’s departure, Halevi describes the geography of al-Andalus in biblical terms, perceived as the West, vis-à-vis the Hispanic kingdoms, the East. The province of Granada, birthplace of the Ibn ‘Ezra’ family, is, in Halevi’s words, “the Galilee of the West.”¹³⁰ Later on, in Castile, this attitude toward life in the Peninsula – al-Andalus and the Hispanic kingdoms – would eventually change. Interesting in this regard is a secular poem Halevi wrote about the distress of the Jewish community of Toledo at the times of the Christian conquest of the city (1085). The poem conveys a sense of all the advantages the Jews living in Castile enjoy but also the conviction that all this prosperity is a mere accident and that Christians – Edom – have long been plotting against Israel. The central section of the poem runs as follows:

I was a noble woman/happy among the daughters of exile
 Until the End of Time came.
 Since the day I was exiled I lived/with Se‘ir. God’s mercy
 Did not depart from me.
 My sons were counselors to his rulers,¹³¹/my people rested between his
 shoulders
 And He always protected them.
 I was honored with the respect given to old men,/over the Torah
 I set watchmen to always be vigilant.
 A community of sages and students/who read the law of the learned,

So that I could fulfill my vows everyday.

The king took council with me./He was fearful of God, the One who shines

Brighter and brighter until the full day.

Esau's hand was with me,/but in his heart he did not stop

Plotting evil all the time.

My community clung to its lot,/but there is a decree that states:

"You do not know what a day might bring forth."¹³²

In many of the well-known poems of Judah Halevi a similar conflict between these terms is critical. The conflict is also manifest in the poetic form. The poems Halevi wrote on Zion are secular poems, not meant to be part of the liturgy, yet many of them came to be included in it. In some of his poems to Zion, Halevi reacts against those who oppose his going to Israel by recalling all the advantages of his position:

They congratulate him for being in the service of kings,

Which to him is like the worship of idols.

Is it right for a faultless and upright man to rejoice,

When he is caught like a bird by a child,

In the service of Philistines, descendants of Hagar, and Hittites,

While alien deities seduce his heart

To do their will, and forsake the will of God,

To deceive the Creator and serve [His] creatures?¹³³

Whereas Samuel ha-Nagid justifies his position in “the company of kings” (*hevrat melakhim*), Halevi abhors being in “servitude to kings” (*'avdut melakhim*). While the Nagid appeals to divine judgment in defense of that position, Halevi constructs an opposition between the human and the divine and interprets service in the courts as “worship of idols” and betrayal of God.¹³⁴ While in Dunash ben Labrat, the contrast between Zion and al-Andalus is a rhetorical strategy, and in the Nagid references to Zion are integrated into poems meant to consolidate and promote their author’s prestige in al-Andalus and throughout the diaspora, Halevi puts forth a defense of emigration and describes an actual conflict between al-Andalus and the Land of Israel, the latter being the place from which he feels in exile.

Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ longed for his idealized Granada, which he describes as paradise, while conceiving the Christian North as wasteland. His poems convey the typical elements present in the literary representation of exile – displacement from center to periphery, from a place invested with meaning to a border territory where existence itself is challenged.¹³⁵ Halevi, in contrast, does not refer to the displacement of Jewish communities within the Peninsula, and describes his exile as exile from Zion. His literary representation of that exile goes against the norm, in that the place of origin, Zion, is described as wilderness, whereas the

place of destination, the Iberian Peninsula, is described as paradise. Halevi's poems indicate that he is in exile from Zion, but his decision to leave the Peninsula also marks the beginning of his exile from Sepharad. At times both constructions clash, thereby deepening the poet's trauma. While exiles never break the emotional tie with the point of origin, Halevi is driven by his will to forget "the orchard he planted and watered, fertile with plants." "I will not remember," he says, "Judah and Azar'el, his two precious flowers ... soon I will forget the synagogue, in whose teaching I found solace ... I have exchanged my chambers for the shrubs' shadows, the safety of my locks for a thorny hedge."¹³⁶

The function of the Other is identical in Halevi's religious and secular poetry, especially poems to Zion and those written during his trip to Palestine, an aspect that sets him apart from his predecessors. The increasing number of conversions to Christianity, the advance of the Reconquista and the poet's disenchantment with the institution of the court rabbi, caused above all by the death of his protector Solomon ibn Ferruziel in 1108, are all reasons proposed to explain his rejection of life at court and his decision to leave the Peninsula. Coincidentally, Halevi's decision to emigrate comes at a time when, alongside the advance of the Reconquista in Iberia and the Crusades in the East, ideas about emigration and exile were being re-evaluated. Among Muslims, a literature of *responsa* about the movement away from the land of unbelief was being produced. In Sufi circles the concept of *hijra* ("migration") understood in a literal or metaphorical sense began to play an increasingly important role.¹³⁷ In this regard, Halevi's poems should be regarded as having a performative function and as driving him to action.

Throughout this Chapter, I have explored the ways in which multiple experiences of exile among medieval Jewish authors created a constant need for definition of the Self vis-à-vis the Other. Central to the concept of exile, and pervasive during the period surveyed in this chapter, is the idea of a national, collective exile. Andalusi Jewish authors inherited from the rabbis and the *payyətanim* typological frameworks to describe the relationship between Jews, living in exile outside of Israel, and Gentiles. Liturgical poetry provided the ideal ground for the literary representation of that worldview.

Within liturgical poetry the Other was identified with Muslims and Christians. While differences between both groups were on occasion noted, they most often formed a symbolic unity. Typically, their attitude toward Israel was represented as that of a cruel oppressor. Interaction with them also took place within a larger typological framework, as Israel's submission to the nations in the present was understood as the reversal of a natural relationship of power, and the future was simply envisioned as retrieval of Israel's superiority over them. Encoding and typology worked at different levels and, inasmuch as metaphor as a pattern of thought enables social change, both strategies were intended for consolation.¹³⁸ The paradigm of previous exiles and the previous punishments of Israel's enemies gave the community hope for a similar end for their exile.

Description of their relationship with Muslims and Christians as an inversion of the natural balance of power asserted the superiority of the Self over the Other. God's answers in the poems confirmed, against Christian and Muslim allegations, that God's favor upon Israel had not been withdrawn. The idea of collective, national exile cannot be separated from that of redemption, discussed in the following chapter.

Typological representation, however, is not blind to either historical changes or the personal circumstances of the poet. A comparative analysis of Ibn Gabirol and Ibn al-Tabbān's liturgical poems is illustrative in this regard. Ibn Gabirol, who lived in the Taifa of Saragossa in the first half of the eleventh century under the rule of the Banū Hūd, insists on the injustice of Israel's submission to the nations and pleads for Israel's restoration to her former superior status. This insistence on reversal of status is parallel to the situation he describes in his secular poetry between himself and other court poets, which he occasionally conveys by means of the collective exile of Israel. Ibn al-Tabbān, in contrast, who witnessed the events that led to the conquest of Saragossa by Alfonso I of Aragon in 1118, if not the conquest itself, describes in great detail traumatic scenes of suffering and affliction. By this, I am not trying to argue that the purpose of the poems is that of reflecting the historical context. Rather, the poems, through a metaphorical-typological identification, create this reality in constant dialogue with various contexts and only within the bounds of the creative possibilities that the contexts provide.¹³⁹ This process of creation is far from fossilized.

This perception of time and the Other, to different degrees is always in the background of any representation of domicile. The idea of the exile of Israel as described in the previous paragraphs in secular poetry, and exceptionally in prose, has to be carefully considered within the new literary framework in which it is inserted. Thus, Ibn Nagrīlah transfers the typological framework typical of liturgical poetry into secular poetry, including a representation of different ethnic groups as ancestral enemies of Israel. His ultimate purpose, then, is self-legitimizing. Panegyrists metaphorically use the opposition between Jews and Gentiles to describe rivalry between themselves and their opponents, which implies a self-identification as Israel vis-à-vis a patron, metaphorically described as God, or the Messiah. Passages representing the Jewish community's good quality of life are exceptional. In pre-Almoravid times, Ibn Paqudah's description of Jewish life in exile is remarkably unique. After the arrival of the Almoravids to the Peninsula, however, a sense of nostalgia surfaced in works written by Jewish authors of Andalusi origin in the Christian North. It is in this context that catalyzes a sense of identification between the Jewish and the Muslim elites.

At the end of the Taifa period, the exile from al-Andalus precipitated new ways of perceiving and describing Muslims and Islamic culture. While I have observed that changes in the historical context had an effect on the text, Moses ibn 'Ezra's and Judah Halevi's works come to demonstrate that a similar

historical context could have radically different textual manifestations, which corroborates the idea that the text does not reflect reality but instead creates it. While Ibn ‘Ezra’s description of the Other in liturgical poetry is generic, and references to the Land of Israel are hardly present, Halevi’s Other is characterized in religious terms and mocks Israel for the delay of the expected redemption. The dialogue form of Halevi’s liturgical poetry conveys a highly charged polemical context. As for their secular poetry, Ibn ‘Ezra’ uses the liturgical framework of national *galut* to describe exile from Granada. Because, in terms of language and culture, he identifies with Arabo-Muslims, in place of the aggression of the Other Ibn ‘Ezra’ substitutes Time, a more generic opponent common in Arabic poems of complaint. Halevi transfers with hardly any change the liturgical concept of exile into his secular poetry, but he himself does not feel exiled from al-Andalus, but rather from the land of Israel.

WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

Self and Other in the journey toward the end of time

As observed in the introduction of the preceding chapter, medieval Jewish authors represented their present time in strong connection not only with their past but also with the eschatological future. Speculation on the end of the historical cycle had a long, well-established tradition among Jews, earlier stages of which can be easily traced back to the Second Temple period. As is well known, the destruction of the First Temple and the loss of national independence brought forth hopes for the restoration of the House of David, and the return of Israel to God, that eventually materialized in the form of a national eschatology.¹ Central to it was the figure of a Davidic Messiah, references to whom had first begun to appear in post-exilic prophetic literature. Conceived as an agent of God, the Messiah was expected to defeat Israel's enemies and bring about collective redemption.²

Over the course of the second century BCE, in addition to this national eschatology, apocalyptic trends also began to become visible in Jewish literature, the earliest example of these trends being the last few chapters in the book of Daniel. A sub-category within eschatology, apocalyptic thought locates its audience at the end of a particular pattern of historical time. The exact date for the advent of the End remains concealed, and only hints of it are given to the Prophets in cryptic revelations. Prophetic texts on the End of history, destined to become a favorite subject of speculation for generations of exegetes over time, describe it as imminent, inevitable and cataclysmic.³

As argued in the preceding chapter, life in exile entails a constant need to define the Self by opposition to the Other in a given time and place. Speculation on the End of Days, in turn, creates a similar need for defining the relationship between Self and Other on several fronts.⁴ First, the imminent approach of the End brings about an expectation of the return of prophecy and, along with it, much speculation on its hypothetical ideal recipients. Medieval Jewish scholars debate whether or not prophecy is restricted to Israel and whether or not gentile prophetic claims are to be given credibility. Second, eschatological activity and apocalyptic thought are often associated with conversion; and conversion, whether individual or collective, voluntary or forced, always puts communal identity to the test. The status of the proselyte, along with that of the apostate,

thereby becomes crucial in determining the boundaries between Self and Other in this world and, ultimately, in the World to Come. Third, the notion that the Other is to have a key role in ushering the End is widespread. Finally, transition from a historical to a trans-historical order calls for a discussion on the status of the Other in post-historical times and on the eventual abolition of otherness.

On a theoretical level, one might well wish to distinguish between scholarly eschatological speculation, on the one hand, and popular messianic movements, on the other. In practice, however, a clear distinction between the two is almost impossible to make. While scholars often attempted to oppose and counter popular messianic and apocalyptic tendencies, there is also historical evidence which indicates frequent mutual influence.

Along the same lines, one can visualize the development of a Jewish eschatological tradition in parallel or in contrast to its Christian and Islamic counterparts. In practice, all three traditions developed in constant interaction with each other. In fact, eschatology, of all religious phenomena, has proven a most fertile arena for cultural and religious exchange between communities. Over the course of the Middle Ages, Christians, for whom Jesus had brought about the Messianic Kingdom, anticipated his Second Coming, which would mark the beginning of the Kingdom of God. Muslims, for their part, expected the *Mahdī*, a reformer and restorer of justice who, it was said, would appear in the End of Time and would lead a return to the pristine purity of early Islamic times.⁵

This broader background in which speculation on the End of Time takes place, namely, a context consisting of both the larger framework of Jewish messianic activity and that of the relationship and mutual interaction between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim messianic expectations, will be frequently pointed out in the following pages. However, the inquiry put forth by this and all preceding chapters remains focused on the textual production of a Jewish elite. As in all preceding chapters, both the context in which the texts were written and the rhetoric of texts will be the two axes guiding the inquiry. These two coordinates, context and textual rhetoric, are in fact illustrative of two successive stages in the scholarly work on messianic activity and eschatological theory and doctrine. Since the 1960s, as a reaction against earlier scholarship that assumed a causal relationship between catastrophe and messianic anxiety, a new trend in the study of these phenomena pointed out that many other conditions proved to be equally predisposing in stirring hopes for the advent of the ultimate end. Scholars participating in this trend emphasized the need to take all surrounding social, political and economic factors into consideration. Yonina Talmon's taxonomy of all sociological scenarios and possible conditions in which eschatology surfaced is paradigmatic of this approach.⁶ More recently, albeit without denying the importance of sociological factors, some scholars have called for a study of eschatology as a discourse of its own, that is, as rhetoric. Along these lines, in his work on the rhetoric of apocalypse, Stephen O'Leary has argued that disaster, calamity, and deprivation actually can be rhetorically induced perceptions. In his view, the symbolism of apocalypticism

is shaped by, and in turn helps to shape, the collective behavior of its historical audiences.⁷ In other words, a text not only reflects reality, but also contributes to its creation.

Eschatology and messianic hopes in al-Andalus before the Caliphate

It was common for standard works on Jewish messianic thought to assume a general lack of interest in matters concerning the End of Days among Peninsula Jews until the mid-twelfth century. More than twenty years ago, however, thorough examination of eighth- and ninth-century Mozarabic documentation allowed Juan Gil to argue differently.⁸ Admittedly, only one of the many sources studied by Gil, the anonymous *Chronicle of 754*, mentions a Jewish pseudo-Messiah.⁹ In spite of the scarcity of identifiable Messianic pretenders, however, Mozarabic chronicles attest a climate of exacerbated eschatological anxiety and messianic hope among both Jews and Christians in the Peninsula during this time. Sources provide abundant proof for active exchange of eschatological ideas between Andalusi and Eastern Christians and, although evidence is lacking, similar contacts between Andalusi and Eastern Jewish communities reasonably may be presumed.¹⁰ Exchange of specific predictions between Mozarabs and Jews in al-Andalus itself is also widely attested. The Christian conviction that the year 800 would mark the beginning of the Kingdom of God, for example, found an echo in Jewish circles.¹¹ Competing claims of accurate predictions for the coming of the End were often asserted as ways to affirm the superiority of the Self versus the Other. In this regard, the ninth-century epistolary exchange between Alvarus of Cordova and the Frankish convert to Judaism, Bodo Eleazar (b. ca. 814), accounts for an early example of shared interest in eschatological predictions and a similar use of calculations of the End with polemical intent.¹²

Speculation on the End of Time in al-Andalus in this early period was not confined to Mozarabs and Jews. In fact, and as observed by Maribel Fierro, Islamic eschatological literature began to permeate the Peninsula in the ninth century, along with Shiite tendencies. In addition to scholarly speculation, Fierro argues, evidence has been found that accounts for the use of mahdist claims among opponents to the Umayyad government since at least the times of ‘Abd al-Rahmān I (734–88).¹³

Both Gil and Fierro concur in stressing that messianic hopes among Jews, Mozarabs, and Muslims, most notably Berbers, seem to have been the by-product of Islam’s expansion in the North of Africa and al-Andalus. The eighth and ninth centuries, in general, and the second half of the ninth century in particular, bear witness to extreme religious agitation and high rates of conversion across communities that may have proliferated expectations of an imminent End of Time. While very little is known about conversion to or from Judaism¹⁴ and it is even assumed that it did not occur in significant numbers, it

is likely that individual cases, such as that of Bodo Eleazar mentioned above, carried a symbolic significance. In addition to religious agitation, conversion and polemics, Fierro brings attention to the use of eschatological rhetoric as a means to challenge and oppose the established political power. In any event, the preceding observations are meant to provide some general background for tenth- and eleventh-century messianic anxiety as expressed in texts written by Jewish authors.

Eschatological discourse during the tenth and eleventh centuries

No Jewish messianic pretenders or popular movements are known in al-Andalus for this period. Documentation in the Cairo Geniza, however, confirms the great extent to which messianic hopes were an intrinsic part of everyday life among Jews throughout the Mediterranean. As Goitein points out, between the mid-tenth and the mid-twelfth centuries, the period covered by the Geniza material, messianic language pervades the daily discourse of all social strata, from popular classes to members of the elite.¹⁵ Hence, traders who lived in distant places hoped for a reunion they compared with the final ingathering in Jerusalem prior to the End of Days; personal letters ended with best wishes for the advent of the Messiah; and letters to Jewish authorities closed with wishes for their rule to last until the time of redemption.

Beyond the level of everyday language use, liturgy constantly actualized the hope for salvation. During the daily service, petitions for the ingathering of the exiled communities, the advent of the Messiah, and the Day of Judgment were at the core of the Eighteen Benedictions (*shemoneh ‘esreh*) contained in the *‘amidah* (lit. “standing prayer”), the devotion that constitutes the central part of each liturgical service. Prayers for the new moon and for the three pilgrim festivals also included pleas for the coming of the messianic age and final redemption.¹⁶ Besides statutory prayers, poetic additions to the liturgy, or *piyyutim*, provided ample venues for the expression of messianic hopes. As noticed in the preceding chapter, liturgical poems of national lament constantly linked the concept of *galut* and life among the nations to that of *ge’ullah* to the extent that both concepts are often inextricable from one another. The term *ge’ullah*, in fact, also designates a particular type of poem on the theme of redemption to be recited during service, after the reading of the *shema*.

The following six-verse *piyyut* by Dunash ben Labrat provides an early example attesting the projection of the relationship between the present Self and Other onto the Final Time.

[Oh Lord,] pluck up Edom who has uprooted
the shoot planted [by your hand] to near eradication.
Darken Qedar’s face

Who has afflicted me much.
 Make our justice
 And salvation blossom, like a garden.
 [Re]build the city of our joy,
 Madmanah and Sansanah (Joshua 15:31).
 Turn the stone the builders rejected
 Into the chief cornerstone (Psalms 118:22).
 May those ransomed by God return
 And reach Zion with joy!¹⁷

This short poem masterfully encapsulates several elements relating to the advent of messianic times. Dunash pleads with God to bring final justice and salvation to the community of Israel. Salvation, as envisioned in the poem, entails the advent of the Messiah, the reconstruction of Israel's cities, the return of the exiles to Zion, the regaining of its former status, and the punishment of its enemies. Edom and Qedar, that is, Christians and Muslims, embody evil in this world and are to be destroyed prior to the End of Days. In the poem, present and future are mirror images of one another. The End of Time is described as outcome of the present suffering, but by the same token, the ideal End of Time determines and dictates the poet's view of his present time.

By the time Ibn Gabirol wrote the following *pizmon* (lit. "refrain"), the second paradigmatic example to be analyzed in this chapter, poems of national lament associated with the liturgical service were a well-established tradition in al-Andalus. Ibn Gabirol's poem illustrates how the expected redemption fitted into Israel's historical consciousness or, conversely, how history was modeled and given meaning by its very end. The poet says as follows:

Look after the captive,/delivered/into the hands of Babylonia and Se'ir.
 How long has he groaned/for You!/He implores like a little boy.
 With restrained heart,/he [stands] before you, O Lord/and grieves
 For the day in which the enemy/prevailed/and the city was taken.

I bent/and struck my hands/for the day in which five [calamities] befell me.
 For [having made] the golden calf/the tablets of the law were cut off
 from me.
 The enemy conquered/the fortified city/and imprisoned me,
 Put an end to/the [daily] *Tamid* [offering]/and prevented me from hon-
 oring it.
 An idol was placed/in the perfect Temple,/and the enemy set your Law
 on fire.

How I suffer,/and shudder,/for the day God dispossessed me,
 And from the North/a serpent/swept me away/like floodwaters,
 Drove on the captives from/the beautiful land/and made me roll like a ball.

When the light of Sheshakh/darkened,/He pushed me into the hand of
 Paras,
 [Then] the hunter/and the he-goat/assailed [us].

Glory of my heart,/my stronghold,/will you fume in anger forever?
 Don't you see/[your] exhausted people/darkened like an oven?
 Repair my breach/with the Messiah;/from among the thorns, take the lily.
 Build a stately House,/re-establish the borders,/Carmel and Bashan;
 Open your eyes/and take revenge/from Eser and Dishan.¹⁸
 Vindicate the dumb./May the one who devoured [Israel]¹⁹ and set [it]
 on fire, pay for it!²⁰

Ibn Gabirol wrote this *pizmon*, a plea to God for salvation, for the commemoration of the seventeenth day of Tammuz, the day on which, according to the Talmud (BT *Ta'anit* 4:6), and as recalled by the poet, five catastrophes befell Israel – the tablets of the law were broken on account of the golden calf, the daily *Tamid* offering ceased, the walls of Jerusalem were breached, the Torah burnt and a pagan idol was displayed in the Temple. Contrition, enactment of collective memory, and a cyclical conception of time well suit a poem intended to commemorate the razing of the walls of Jerusalem.²¹

In this poem by Ibn Gabirol, as in hundreds of other poems written in al-Andalus between the tenth and twelfth centuries, the apocalyptic mentality comes to the foreground. Thus, the poet describes history within a divinely determined sequence, as subjection to four consecutive kingdoms, following the pattern established in the book of Daniel. In the poet's words, these are She-shakh, that is, Babylonia,²² Paras or Persia, Rome, described here as Esau, "the hunter,"²³ and finally the he-goat, in reference to Greece.²⁴ This conception of history, probably of Persian origin, can be traced back in the Jewish tradition to an apocalyptic mode of thought that developed during the period of persecution against the Jews instigated by Antiochus IV in the second century BCE.²⁵ In Ibn Gabirol's day, the four kingdoms mentioned in the book of Daniel were central in both Christian and Jewish biblical exegesis and eschatological speculation. In the Jewish context, Muslims and Christians as represented in this pattern embodied a paradigmatic evil Other. They filled the role of Israel's oppressor in the ancient prophecies, and because they came last in the sequence of Israel's oppressors, they were thought to occupy a key role in ushering the End of Days.

In the final strophe of the poem Ibn Gabirol calls for the advent of the Messiah (Ben Peres, the one who will repair the wall).²⁶ Along with the advent of the Messiah, the poet pleads for restoration of the borders of the national territory and punishment for the enemies. In Ibn Gabirol's works, as I have indicated in the previous chapter, this punishment strongly and graphically implies the reversal of the contemporary situation of subjection to Muslims (and Christians). The End of Days as described in liturgical poetry was envisioned, therefore, to entail the vindication of the just and the punishment of the evil Other.

By insisting on the punishment of enemies prior to the End of Time, liturgical poems guaranteed the superiority of Jews over Christians and Muslims in the present.

Messianic hopes and apocalyptic mood were at the very core of liturgical poetry describing the relationship between God and Israel. In these compositions, the poet, representing his community, implored God for final salvation. However, messianic language was by no means confined to the liturgical sphere. Secular poems, especially panegyrics and poems of self-praise, drew on a similar messianic rhetoric. In previous chapters I have referred to two uses of messianic elements that I believe are worth reviewing at this point, if only briefly. First, in Chapter 3, I stressed how poets often described the multiple aspects of the relationship they had with their addressees on the basis of a parallel relationship between Israel and God, or Israel and the Messiah. By virtue of this identification, the addressee/patron was able to bring redemption to the poet and/or the community.²⁷ Second, as I observed in Chapter 1, poets invested themselves with a prophetic or a messianic character regarding their relationship with the Hebrew language.²⁸ Hence, in Andalusi secular poetry, poets describe themselves as *nevi'ē ha-shir* (“prophets of poetry”) and contend they are able to redeem the Hebrew language and bring it back to life. Both representations are based on similar metaphorical projections. In both cases, the relationship between the Messiah/God and the community is projected onto the relationship linking the benefactor and the poet, on the one hand, and the poet and the Hebrew language, on the other. By identifying himself with the community of Israel, the poet aims to gain his benefactor’s support. By portraying himself as defender, prophet and ultimately savior of the Hebrew language, the poet portrays himself with heroic overtones. In both cases the poet describes either the patron or himself as victor against the Other – an ethnic and religious Other in the first case, and the Arabic language in the second.

Messianic language was, therefore, prevalent both in everyday language and in literary texts throughout the tenth and the eleventh centuries among Andalusi Jews. This pervasiveness may help to clarify the final topic in this section, namely, the use of eschatological rhetoric among Jews who held high positions at court. Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut’s letter to the Khazars and some of Ibn Nagrīlah’s war poems are clear examples of this use. In the preceding chapter I pointed out the interplay between the concepts of exile and domicile in the letter to the Khazars.²⁹ Throughout the letter, images of a land of desolation, as space of exile, stood in contrast with a paradisiacal description of al-Andalus; the lack of power of the Jews in exile stood side by side with the description of Ḥasdai’s power. This interplay between exile and domicile works in conjunction with the tension between the present and the messianic future. The terms of this tension between present and future are, actually, set up in the introductory poem to the

letter, written by Ḥasdai's secretary, Menahem ben Saruq.³⁰ In the first part of the poem (verses 1 to 17), Ben Saruq addresses the Khazar kingdom using Isaiah's expression *shevet moshelim* ("tribe of dominators"), according to Isaiah 14:5, and describes the victories of the Khazar armies, under God's protection. The poet highlights their national sovereignty and capacity for self-defense. From verse 18, the situation described in the first part of the poem, that is, the existence of a Remnant who dominates the mighty – that is, a sovereign Jewish nation with the capacity to defend itself – is contrasted with the image of Israel dispersed, enslaved, separated from its sacred space, and, above all, deprived of redemption. Thus, the poet asserts: "Long have the ages elapsed, and the days extended, and no sign is yet visible./Revelation and prophet are sealed; spirit and vision are not widespread (1 Samuel 3:1)/The visions of the precious man (Daniel 10:11) have not been revealed; prophecy has not been disclosed." The remaining section of the poem (verses 31–7) is a plea to God for the coming of the Messiah and the final redemption. The sudden transition between the two sections in the poem invites the reader to interpret them in juxtaposition to one another. In this regard, the first part of the poem establishes the terms in which the second is to be understood. The redemption for which the poet pleads parallels the description of the Khazar kingdom.

Within the letter proper Ibn Shaprūṭ shows a great deal of interest in all practical matters relating to the Khazar kingdom. He inquires about social issues, governmental infrastructure, systems of defense, taxes, conversions, borders, transference of power, genealogies, and language use. However, and as an addendum to all these worldly interests, Ibn Shaprūṭ finally requests information regarding any calculations the Khazars might know for the date of the final redemption. Ibn Shaprūṭ argues that his inquiry is driven by the desire to contradict polemical arguments: "We have been cast out of our glory, so that we have nothing to reply when they say daily unto us: 'Every other people has a kingdom, but of yours there is no memorial on the earth.'"³¹ Indeed, and as already suggested above, both Christians and Muslims often used the delay in the advent of the Messiah against Jews. By the mid-ninth century the bishop of Lyon, in his *Liber contra Iudeos*, pointed out the failure of all Jewish messianic speculations to that date.³² Similarly, in his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwā'* *wa-l-nihāl* ("Book of Opinions on Religions, Sects, and Heresies"), the eleventh-century Andalusi scholar Ibn Ḥazm connected these failed messianic calculations with the loss of political power among the Jews. In arguing that Isaac's blessing to Jacob in Genesis 27:39–40, which involved his rule over the nations, never materialized, Ibn Ḥazm asserts:

Never did the nations serve either Jacob or his descendants ... it was rather the sons of Israel who served all other nations in all countries and territories, and were obediently subject to all other races of the earth, both in antiquity and in contemporary times, in the times in which they had political power as well as thereafter.... Should the Jews argue that

the time of this blessing will come, we would answer that all times they established for the political power to return to their hands have past.³³

By inquiring about the date of the final redemption and the advent of the Messiah, Ibn Shaprūṭ strongly identifies with his community by opposition to the Other, whether Christian or Muslim. Discussion about calculations of the End and speculation about the Final Time actually gave the Jews superiority over the Other in the present.

Moreover, beyond the polemical goal that Ibn Shaprūṭ presumably pursues by way of his inquiry about the date of the End, the voicing of messianic hopes and the use of messianic rhetoric might have had a further goal in his letter. In this regard, it is worth recalling the terms established by the introductory poem by Menahem ben Saruq – the final messianic liberation for which the poet calls is juxtaposed with, and thereby subject to interpretation in terms of, having a self-governing kingdom. Similarly, Ibn Shaprūṭ's interest in the coming of the End can be read in terms of hopes for independence and power. Whether or not Ibn Shaprūṭ considered it possible for these hopes to come to fruition is a matter of pure speculation. What seems clear, however, is that he uses this messianic rhetoric to strengthen and legitimate his leadership of the Andalusi Jewish community. Longing for the end of history and the restoration of Israel is also Ibn Shaprūṭ's strategy for consolidating power *within* history in al-Andalus.

A very similar use of eschatological language with legitimizing motives appears in Samuel ibn Nagrīlah's poems, some of which were discussed in the previous chapter. First, a short poem he writes before the battle of al-Funt is worth noting.³⁴ In this poem Ibn Nagrīlah claims to have received a prophecy from God in a dream. As is not the case with many other Jewish poets, both in al-Andalus and Christian Spain, the prophecy received here does not relate to the Hebrew language but to the battle about to take place, a battle in which Ibn Nagrīlah describes himself with messianic overtones.³⁵ This short poem aside, most of Ibn Nagrīlah's other war poems also abound in messianic references. The poet describes the battle taking place with apocalyptic overtones, the enemy as the ancestral enemies of Israel, the final victory as the redemption of the Jewish community and, what is even more relevant, he presents himself as his community's savior.³⁶

Eschatological rhetoric becomes central in three poems that deserve closer attention at this point. Among the wide array of variation exhibited by the introductory sections of Ibn Nagrīlah's war poems, poems 8, 25, and 31 quite atypically open with sections where the poet longs for Zion and grieves for its state of decay. All three poems have long attracted the interest of scholars and have been given different readings. From a literary point of view, Schippers has emphasized the parallel between these three introductions and the Arabic *topos* of *bukā' ʻalā al-athāl* ("lament over the ruins"), typical of the polythematic *qaṣīda*.³⁷ From a socio-historical point of view, they have been used as evidence to argue that the Jewish exile under Islam was as dark as that experienced under

Christian rule.³⁸ Thus, for Halkin, references to Zion in secular poetry prove that Andalusī authors were not satisfied with their individual success but yearned for the success of the whole community. Therefore, the Nagid would have felt his victory in Arjona mentioned in one of his poems to be incomplete.³⁹ All of these approaches, in different degrees, have managed to ignore the function that these sections have in relation to the rest of the poem.⁴⁰ When integrated into the poem, it is clear that they provide the necessary terms to understand Ibn Nagrīlah's literary construction of the battle in the central section of the poem. Thus, in poem 8, for example, the conflict between Israel and Edom over the Holy Land in the introductory section is projected onto the opposition between Ibn Nagrīlah and his battlefield opponents Yaddayr, Wāṣil and Muwaffaq, as retold in the central section of the poem.⁴¹ By juxtaposing the two sections and projecting the first onto the second part of the poem, Ibn Nagrīlah impels his audience to understand the battle in which he is taking part as a battle for Zion. As was the case in Ibn Shapruṭ's letter to the Khazars, reference to the national exile of Israel and longing for Zion in Ibn Nagrīlah's poems are elements contributing to the poet's symbolic self-portrayal, intended to legitimize his power and authority.

The use of messianic rhetoric in Ibn Shapruṭ's letter and Ibn Nagrīlah's poems is reminiscent of that found in the discourse of contemporary Muslim rulers. Worth recalling in this regard is the fact that 'Abd al-Rahmān III, in whose service Ibn Shapruṭ was employed, proclaimed himself caliph in the year 929, becoming *amīr al-mu'minīn*.⁴² In her studies on the Caliphate period in al-Andalus, Maribel Fierro has called attention to the different strategies 'Abd al-Rahmān III used to legitimize this title.⁴³ First among them was the adoption of honorific titles, such as *nāṣir li-dīn Allah* ("the victor in God's religion"), which no other Umayyad previous to him had adopted, and that of *al-qā'im bi-llāh* ("the one who stands up for God"). This latter title, with strong religious connotations among the Ismailis, was used to designate the *Mahdī*.⁴⁴ Furthermore, it was not by accident that 'Abd al-Rahmān III made his accession to power to coincide with the beginning of the fourth century of the *hijra*.⁴⁵ The start of each century, according to the Islamic tradition, is marked by the appearance of a reformer or *mujaddid*. This is another category of messianic connotation, inasmuch as it was assumed that the last *mujaddid* would be the *Mahdī*.⁴⁶ Finally, in letters he exchanged with North African rulers, 'Abd al-Rahmān III alludes constantly to the conquest of the East, or the sacred places of Islam, presented as a Reconquest or recovery of the inheritance of his ancestors.⁴⁷ Both his honorific titles and his plan to reclaim a sacred territory, elements which contain eschatological resonance, had a clear propagandistic intent, the aim of which was the legitimization of the Umayyad caliph of Damascus, and the transmission of his legitimacy through the Andalusī Umayyad branch.

In the first chapter I pointed out 'Abd al-Rahmān III and Ibn Shapruṭ's common interest in achieving cultural independence from the East. The use of eschatological imagery and symbolism could be seen as a parallel aspect of the

construction of identity and legitimization of political power in both the Islamic and the Jewish communities.⁴⁸

Messianic activity and speculation in Almoravid and Almohad times

During the last quarter of the eleventh and first quarter of the twelfth centuries, historical events came to stir messianic hopes among Andalusi Jews.⁴⁹ The military struggle between Christians and Muslims that followed the arrival of the Almoravids in the Peninsula in 1086 was interpreted as the historical realization of the wars of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38–39), which were expected to precede the final liberation of Israel.⁵⁰ Moreover, rumors circulated that the End of Days would begin in the year 500 h. (1107). As the appointed date passed and the End did not come, some thought the calculation should be made according to solar, rather than lunar years, and hence pushed the date forward to 1122.⁵¹ As in previous periods, messianic speculation crossed the divides between communities and was often charged with polemical intent, as attested in the fourteenth-century chronicle *Al-hulal al-mawshiyya*. The anonymous author of this chronicle reports that when the Almoravid ruler Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Tashūfin (ca. 1086–1106) came to al-Andalus, he insisted on passing by the city of Lucena because:

One of Cordova’s jurists had found a book written by Ibn Massara, al-Jiblī, al-Qurtubī.⁵² In this book Ibn Masarra reports a tradition he traces back to the Prophet, according to which the Jews would have committed themselves to convert had their prophet not come by the beginning of the fifth century h., for in their Torah God had told Moses: “Undoubtedly, justice and eternal light will appear by means of the Prophet, the Messiah, whose name is Muḥammad.” The Jews thought that this would be one of theirs, and had this one not come before the beginning of the fifth century h., it would be Muḥammad.⁵³

The chronicler adds that Muslim authorities used the failure of this prediction to obtain money from Lucena’s Jews, as had happened before in other parts of the Islamic world.⁵⁴ Following the Almoravid conquests in al-Andalus, as Jewish communities began to move toward the Northern Christian kingdoms, the exiles would eventually encounter the Northern eschatological and apocalyptic traditions, a matter to which I will return later in this chapter.

A few years after the Almoravids finally took control over the former Taifa kings, Urban II’s summoning for the First Crusade (1096) and its aftermath – namely, the attacks against Ashkenazi Jewry and the military confrontation between Crusaders and Muslims in Jerusalem – added to the already widespread messianic fever among Sephardic Jews. In fact, the Crusades brought about general messianic excitement, not just in Sepharad and Ashkenaz, but throughout the Jewish diaspora.⁵⁵

As Almoravid power was coming to an end in the Peninsula, messianic beliefs began to appear in al-Andalus and the Maghrib. Moses al-Darī, a Maghribi Jew from Dar'a, is known to have predicted the imminent coming of the Messiah.⁵⁶ Between 1100 and 1110 some Jews from Cordova are said to have believed Ibn Aryeh to be the Messiah himself.⁵⁷ This messianic activism, unknown from previous periods, is absolutely consistent with the larger Islamic context in which the Jews lived, since Almohads based their opposition to Almoravid rule on mahdist claims.⁵⁸ As is well known, Ibn Tūmart (d. 1129), founder of the Almohad movement, came to proclaim himself *Mahdī*. As first observed by Graetz, and as often recalled in standard bibliography on messianism, the Almohad ruler 'Abd al-Mū'min (1130–63) also tried to turn the failure of calculations on the coming of the End among Jews into an argument to bring about their conversion.⁵⁹

It is well known that Almohad rulers put forth a political program aiming to establish a kingdom of justice on earth. They advocated social reform, promoted the *jihād* against the infidel and placed *dhimmīs* under an iron fist. However, the precise situation and status of religious minorities in Almohad times remains a matter of dispute. Classical scholarship on Jews and Judaism in this period often convey a picture of generalized, systematic persecution of the Jewish communities. Beginning with the work of David Corcos-Abulafia, a somewhat more nuanced picture progressively took shape that restricted extreme persecution to the period following the rebellion of Granada in 1162, and especially circumscribed it to the rule of Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr (1184–99).⁶⁰ During al-Manṣūr's rule, indeed, the segregation of the Jewish population reached its peak.⁶¹ In spite of the severe persecution, no legal document abrogating the pact of *dhimma* appears to have been issued throughout the period.⁶²

The situation of Jews appears to have differed from that of contemporary Christians. While the former did not disappear as a group from al-Andalus and the Maghrib, there is no trace of Mozarabs in al-Andalus for the period 1147–60. Their presence in the Maghrib was minimal and probably limited to traders or mercenaries.⁶³ Even so, the fact remains that conversion of Jews to Islam was massive, especially during al-Manṣūr's rule. During this period more than ever before, persecution and conversion put Jewish identity to the test.

Throughout Almoravid and Almohad times, messianic anxiety and apocalypticism increasingly became manifest in liturgical poetry. Among all poets in his generation, Judah Halevi stands out in pervasively voicing complaints about the absence of prophecy, the lack of signs announcing the end, and the delay in coming of the Messiah.⁶⁴ The following poem, a *selīḥah* with messianic overtones, encompasses several distinct ideas all revealing an acute yearning for the Final End:

The doves of the valley/hum in fear.
Their charm is gone,/their honor disgraced.

WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

Their wealth and riches are/now Yitran's and Hemdan's.⁶⁵
They have been set apart/to be slaughtered and destroyed.
For over one thousand years/they have had thorns on their flanks,
For they have had no advocate./The days of their lifetime, however, are
numbered –
A time, times/and half a time (Daniel 7:25).

Their dawns have been darkened,/their sparks extinguished.
Because their wings were weak,/and those who chased them are fast
They wave away/their precious riches.
Wherever I scattered them,/crocodiles devour them.
They have Arabs as princes,/Edomites as chiefs.
Meshek and Philistia/devour them.⁶⁶
They are set apart/and no one aids them.

Nevayot⁶⁷ and the Cushites⁶⁸/subdue the Israelites.⁶⁹
They leave them crushed,/abandoned in a corner.
The noblemen are interrogated,/their houses searched,
Men and women/constantly punished.
False accusations/cause the snakes to chase
And imprison them./They wear a cloak of humiliation
Over their garments,/like skin and rags.

Historical events/were revealed to the Sages
But the End is hidden,/closed and sealed.
There are neither prophets,/nor seers, neither *urim*, nor *tummim*.
Eternal justice/is traded for magic.
The kings' daughters/are enslaved to the nations.
They broke off their rings/and poured out their perfumes,
While their servant enjoyed/their cinnamon and nard.

Take her ring away/from Ga'tam's hand⁷⁰
And from Qedar's head/her precious diadem.
Cause those who long for her downfall/to drink from their [own] cup!
Disclose the sealed End!/Brighten the darkened light!
Raise your pennant/above the pennants of those who are their servants.
Set the priests' tent/among their four pennants.
May they spread out their carpets/from Beer Sheva to Dan.⁷¹

In this breathtaking poem, as in all messianic and apocalyptic examples presented above, the poet causes his audience to experience history from the standpoint of its very end. The poem combines a sense of despair with a sense of confidence – the despair of knowing that one thousand years have past after the destruction of the Temple and still history has not been brought to an end,⁷² and

the confidence of knowing that the End, as announced in the book of Daniel, is imminent. Halevi assures his audience that this last exile, as all prior exiles of Israel, will come to an end, and that end draws near.

In the poem, the present is consequently described as the catastrophic period preceding the coming of the End, a time rabbinic and medieval Jewish sources describe as *hevlo shel mashiah* (“the birth pangs of the Messiah”). The community is portrayed as helplessly facing a multiple predatory enemy who, according to the convention, is represented with biblical names and embodies evil. Halevi’s reference to the replacement of eternal justice by magic in verse 25 reflects either his contemporaries’ reliance on those who make predictions about the End or to their actual conversion to Christianity, since in many other poems he describes Christianity as “magic.” The increasing anxiety that runs throughout the poem reaches its peak in the final strophe when the poet begs for the disclosure of the sealed End.⁷³

The End, as envisioned by Halevi, will be recognized in the Land of Israel, where the priests’ tent will be symbolically restored and the pennants of Israel raised again.⁷⁴ As for God’s attitude toward the enemies, Halevi, who asks God to cause them to drink from their cup, that is, to be punished as harshly as they punished Israel, yearns for vindication and revenge. This ruthless call for vengeance, which is striking in the poem under analysis, is common in Halevi’s poetry. The following verses abound with the same idea. Addressing God, the poet says:

May Shammah,⁷⁵ the pork eater, be driven away...
 In your fury put an end to the maidservant and her son.
 Bring upon them terror and alarm.
 Break her yoke, in the desert and its towns.

Do not forget [to punish] Edom for the yoke of his burden –
 How bitter, how harsh has it been! Who will redeem [Israel]?⁷⁶

In these verses Halevi clearly indicates that the coming of the Messiah is merely an outcome of the present suffering and requests punishment for both Christians – described as pork eaters – and Muslims, in what he perceives to be the time preceding the Final End.

An analogous, perhaps still more compelling yearning for the End of Days is apparent in the work of a poet one generation younger than Halevi, Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’. His poems reveal a similar longing for disclosure of the date of the End and a common desire to hasten the coming of the Messiah.⁷⁷ The following poem is a typical example of Ibn ‘Ezra’s representation of his community’s present and future:

Rock, the One known as Rock of Israel,
 Stand up and help the community of Israel.

My Lord, in the past your hand prevailed.
 Look [now] at your first-born son! Why
 Has he been sold as slave to a maidservant?
 What has become of your Torah's promise, O Lord:
 "For it is [only] to Me that the Israelites are servants"? (Leviticus 25:55)

A blazing fire my heart consumes,
 For I have been enslaved by the hairy one (Genesis 25:25).
 "The older will serve the younger," [Your] promise, is now reversed –
 How is it that God's holy one⁷⁸ cries before Him at the hands of the impure,
 And no one redeems him?

My wounds have been many and my hand has weakened.
 God, annihilate all the sons of Rafah!⁷⁹
 I am left with no argument against those who humiliate me.
 If You are asleep, what can Israel do
 Until Michael comes?

Since the day you departed, beautiful love,
 You have been filled with bitterness; my house has been ruined.
 This is why I have not come to a strange city.
 Now, as you return to the Temple city,
 Great in your midst will be the Holy One of Israel.⁸⁰

While earlier poems by Ibn Gabirol and Halevi describe Israel asleep in the night of exile preceding the final redemption, in this poem by Abraham ibn 'Ezra' it is God who sleeps, indifferent to Israel's unbearable suffering.⁸¹ Worth noting in this regard is the fact that in many poems by Ibn 'Ezra' the enemy scorns and taunts Israel for being in pain before the very eyes of God and for waiting in vain for prophecies that already had been fulfilled during the Second Temple period.⁸² It seems that in the poem under examination, as in many other liturgical poems in his *dīwān*, Ibn 'Ezra', rather than complaining about the Other's arguments against Israel, echoes those arguments and uses them to question God. Therefore, his tone becomes almost accusatory. In verses 5 and 8 he reminds God of his promises in Leviticus 25:55 ("For it is to Me that the Israelites are servants") and Genesis 25:23 ("The older shall serve the younger").⁸³ In the view of both Christians and Muslims, present experience rendered those promises void, confirming God's withdrawal of favor from Israel. Thereby, some poems transmit the enemy's constant pressure on Israel to convert. In addressing God, Ibn 'Ezra' uses the same argument. In the final strophe of the poem, and in an almost self-justifying mode, God attributes the delay of redemption to the enemy's presence in the Holy Land and confirms his continuing protection over Israel.

As for the secular poetry written in this period, the metaphorical presentation of poetry as prophecy, and the identification between poet and prophet, which I

have already mentioned with respect to pre-Almoravid times, continue to be prevalent subsequent to that period. In his *Kitāb Moses ibn ‘Ezra* recalls that the metaphorical identification between poet and prophet was already present in the rabbinic and Andalusi traditions and was found in the works of R. Hai Gaon, Ibn Nagrīlah and Ibn Ghayyat. In spite of its well-established roots in Jewish literature, he opposes the idea that divine inspiration may be received through poetry. In his view, it can only be attained through true prophecy.⁸⁴ As observed in Chapter 1, the identification between poet and prophet would gain popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Hence, in Halevi’s work, dreams, prophecy and the writing of poetry become entangled. During the thirteenth century this metaphorical projection would eventually become engrained in the structure of rhyme narratives.⁸⁵ Besides the continuation of a trend that was already established in the eleventh century, secular poetry written by the mid-twelfth century records motifs and themes that up until then had been confined to the domain of liturgical poetry. Hence, in a long elegy for Solomon ibn Feruziel,⁸⁶ Judah Halevi writes:

May God pour a rain of wrath on [Edom]’s daughter,
 May He crush her roots and cut her foliage.
 May He reward her bosom with loss of children and widowhood.
 May he make all her people lie down like the figures in their images,
 Swing the sickle and reap her harvest, tread
 Her community in a press until all its grape harvests come to an end.⁸⁷

In their secular poetry, poets of previous generations, such as Ibn Gabirol, had used the opposition between Jews and Gentiles to metaphorically describe their own individual relationship vis-à-vis their patron or the bond linking their protector and the Jewish community. In the preceding poem by Halevi, however, reference to Edom is not based on a similar metaphorical projection. Both Halevi and Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ have secular poems based on patterns common in liturgical poetry.⁸⁸

The absence of prophecy, the obsession with calculations on the advent of the End, and the concern with conversion are all elements that, as observed, surfaced with increasing intensity in late eleventh- and twelfth-century liturgical poetry. During the same period, all three topics, each of which is connected to the representation of Muslims and Islam, would also become prevalent in a variety of other genres worth reviewing in more detail. As in liturgical poetry, the authors of most of these works aimed at the consolation and self-identification of their community versus the Other.

Eschatological predictions: Islam as the fourth empire

Throughout this chapter I have referred several times to the Book of Daniel as the basis of most calculations on the End. References to Daniel’s predictions

constantly surfaced in different sources, from polemics to liturgical poetry. In the first part of the twelfth century, however, attempts to interpret Daniel's visions proliferate to an unprecedented degree.⁸⁹ *Sefer Megillat ha-megalleh* by Abraham bar Ḥiyya' (d. ca. 1136) is, in all likelihood, the first work written in the Peninsula to have "engage[d] in calculation on a vast and comprehensive scale."⁹⁰

As indicated earlier,⁹¹ classical rabbinic sources had identified the four empires Daniel sees in his dreams⁹² with Babylonia, Persia (including Media), Greece, and Rome.⁹³ The course of historical events imposed a constant need to make adjustments in that sequence. In Islamic lands, exegetes such as Sa'adia Gaon added Ishmael to the fourth empire. Late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Sephardic authors register new changes and adaptations accommodating recent historical events. Among them, Bar Ḥiyya' offers a detailed interpretation of Daniel's prophecies in Chapter 4 of his book. In this chapter, and within the framework of Daniel's visions,⁹⁴ he puts forth a brief, yet very interesting representation of Islam, one of the few to be found in sources written by Jewish authors in the Peninsula. He describes the upsurge of Islam as follows:

After the wicked [Christians] persisted in error for three hundred and forty years,⁹⁵ a wicked madman (*meshugga' ha-resha'*) rebelled in the lands of Ishmael and carried on their evil behavior, substituting former error with new error and former humiliation with new humiliation, as it is said, "His place will be taken by a *contemptible man*, on which royal majesty was not conferred; he will come in unawares and seize the kingdom through trickery". (Daniel 11:21)⁹⁶

In this brief passage Bar Ḥiyya' portrays Muḥammad as a wicked madman.⁹⁷ He further observes that the meaning of the name "Muḥammad" in Arabic implies "appreciation and praise."⁹⁸ Given that Muḥammad was despised by his own people, however, God changed his name in Scripture to that of *nivzeh*, "the contemptible man" mentioned in Daniel 11:21. Following Daniel 11:21ff., Bar Ḥiyya' first calls attention to the fact that Muḥammad did not come from royal stock, but rather from humble origins. If he attained *malkut* ("political power"), it was only by virtue of flattery, as he used smooth and deceitful talk. He also remarks that after his rebellion, Arabs and Hagarites ("the forces of the flood," according to Daniel 11:22), came together and went after him "to the point of breaking his teeth, spitting on his face and beating him."⁹⁹ Subsequent to Bar Ḥiyya's account, Arabian Jews ("the covenant leader" according to Daniel 11:22) and Hagarite converts to Judaism would have a prominent role in opposing him, but they could not avoid their final defeat. Again, interpreting Daniel 11:23, Bar Ḥiyya' claims Muḥammad unhesitatingly resorted to deceit, and fraud in order to succeed. His fraud, Bar Ḥiyya' adds, involved "the disgrace

(*qalon*) of inventing his religion with deception and falsehood,” as he used “flattery, deception, and refined words.”¹⁰⁰ Later on in his account, he also refers to Muḥammad’s death coming as result of being poisoned.¹⁰¹

This characterization of Muḥammad does not have precedents in earlier Jewish literature in the Peninsula. Rather, it shows certain familiarity with Arabic sources, as references to Muḥammad’s being beaten and getting his teeth broken, or dying after being poisoned, are in fact found in the *hadīth*. Whether or not Bar Ḥiyya’ had direct access to biographies of the prophet in Islamic sources is a matter of speculation. However, given the fact that, among Christians, derogatory descriptions of Muḥammad’s life were commonly invoked to disprove his claims to revelation, it is quite possible that Bar Ḥiyya’ might have obtained his information from Christian anti-Islamic polemical works. The earliest accounts of Muḥammad’s life to be found in the Peninsula date to the eighth century, and such accounts became widespread in the following century.¹⁰² Although the production of these narratives declined during the tenth and the eleventh centuries, by the early twelfth century their production had resumed in full force.¹⁰³ It is reasonable to suppose that Bar Ḥiyya’, who appears to have studied in Huesca under the rule of the Banū Hūd but who actually spent most of his life in Christian territory, must have been familiar with Christian polemical arguments against Islam. Some of the elements he adduces in his characterization of Muḥammad, such as his humble origins, the opposition he faced from Arabs and Hagarites, and the fact that he used deceit, fraud, and flattering words in order to prevail, are widely documented in contemporary Christian polemics. Prominent among them was the *Risāla* or “Apology,” written by ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Ishāq al-Kindī,¹⁰⁴ an Eastern Christian polemical work translated into Latin in 1142 by Pedro de Toledo. The fact that the *Risāla* includes reference to the two *hadīths* Bar Ḥiyya’ quotes in his work further supports the hypothesis that he could have been familiar with al-Kindī’s work¹⁰⁵ or at the very least with polemical arguments common in twelfth-century Christian sources, arguments that might have been well known in Jewish circles.¹⁰⁶

After this brief passage in reference to Muḥammad, Bar Ḥiyya’ interprets the ensuing section in Daniel (11:21–45) as describing the early history of the Islamic empire.¹⁰⁷ The role of Christians and Muslims is presented as one and the same – both are Israel’s oppressors. Bar Ḥiyya’ makes clear that Israel’s condition did not improve once it passed from Christian into Muslim hands. Only occasionally do his observations reveal differences between the two that suggest that he exhibits a more critical attitude toward Christianity. Hence, he reports that both Romans and Muslims allowed the Jews access to the Temple in Jerusalem, so that they might pray and celebrate their holidays there, while in contrast, the “wicked kingdom of Edom,” that is, the Crusaders, removed these privileges and turned the Temple into their house of prayer, profaning it with idols and barring the Jews from it.

Bar Ḥiyya’ died in 1136. Shortly afterwards Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ wrote two

commentaries on the Book of Daniel.¹⁰⁸ In both his commentaries he identified the four empires that would subdue Israel with Babylonia, Persia (including Media), Greece (including Kittim, that is, Rome¹⁰⁹), and Ishmael. The fourth empire, Ishmael, corresponded in his view to the iron part of the statue Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream (Daniel 2:31)¹¹⁰ and to the fourth beast with iron teeth and ten horns among which a little horn would sprout up, mentioned in Daniel's first prophecy (7:1–28). The beast's horns, in Ibn 'Ezra's reading, stand for ten kingdoms that coexist within the Islamic empire and that share one Law – Khurasan, Isfahan, Yemen, or Saba, the kingdom of Mecca, Egypt, Ifriqiya, the kingdom of the Eastern and Western Ishmaelites who live in tents, Philistia or the Almoravids, the kingdom of al-Barbar who are descendants of Cam, and the Cushites. The "little horn that will sprout up" would come from the East, join the Law of the former kingdoms and destroy all former empires.¹¹¹ Unlike the three preceding beasts, this fourth is to be consumed by fire and utterly destroyed.¹¹² The Messiah, in Ibn 'Ezra's view, would emerge out of the war with this fourth kingdom.

Beyond this rather generic identification of the Islamic empire and its different ethnic sub-groups with the fourth beast with ten horns described by Daniel, Ibn 'Ezra's only comment on Islam refers to the Kaaba. In refuting Sa'adia's interpretation of Daniel 11:3, he argues: "the black stone which is in Mecca and that is possibly Merculis [that is, Mercury] has been there from antiquity, and the Meccan people did not accept [Muhammad] until he swore he would issue a commandment so that they could walk around it according to their ancestors' tradition."¹¹³ This comment notwithstanding, Ibn 'Ezra does not elaborate on Muhammad's life nor does he further expand on the development of the Islamic empire. Worth noting is the fact that he does not refer to Muhammad by name, and he only mentions the Kaaba because it allows him to build a counter-argument to Sa'adia's identification of the warrior mentioned in Daniel 11:3 with Ishmael.¹¹⁴

In 1160–61, four years after Ibn 'Ezra's longer commentary on Daniel appeared, Abraham ibn Daud called attention to Daniel yet again in his *Sefer ha-qabbalah*.¹¹⁵ He further modified the identification of the four beasts to fit the current historical situation. Accordingly, Ibn Daud puts forth the following sequence: Persia (including Babylon and Media), Greece (including Rome), Persia (including Rome), and Islam.¹¹⁶ As do Bar Hiyya' and Ibn 'Ezra' before him, Ibn Daud assigns Ishmael a key role in bringing about salvation, in that the Messiah is expected to come out the confrontation between Edom and Ishmael, the third and fourth empires, respectively. Like Ibn 'Ezra', Abraham ibn Daud does not refer in any derogatory way to either Muhammad or Muslims. His only reference to Muhammad describes him as "king of the Arabs, [who] began to make his pretensions (*lit. 'on ta'anot*) in 4374."¹¹⁷

Finally, more tangential references to Daniel's prophecies occur in other sources. Very significant among these is Maimonides' *Iggeret Teman* ("Letter to Yemen"). Because I will refer to this letter's content in greater detail later in this

chapter, I will here simply point out Maimonides' reference to Islam within the framework of Daniel's predictions. In fact, Maimonides does not explicitly identify the four kingdoms in the letter, yet he probably associated them with Persia, Greece, Rome, and Islam. He refers, however, to the latter as the small horn that sprouts up among the fourth beast's ten horns (Daniel 8:7), arguing as follows:

In his description of the rise of the Arab kingdom after the Byzantine Empire, he [Daniel] compared the appearance of the madman [that is, Muḥammad] and his victories over the Byzantines, Persians, and Greeks with a horn that grew and became long and strong.... He says that he saw a small horn that was going up. When it became longer, even marvelously longer, it cast three horns down before it, and behold, the horn had two eyes similar to the eyes of a human and a mouth speaking big things. This obviously alludes to the person who will found a new religion similar to the divine religion and make claim to a revelation and to prophecy.¹¹⁸

Maimonides argues that the strength of this fourth kingdom is transitory because it is to be destroyed, as predicted by Daniel. Overall, works reviewed in this section show very little interest in either Islam or Muslims. With the exception of Bar Ḥiyya's short passage on the biography of the prophet, or Ibn 'Ezra's brief allusion to the Kaaba, no other actual information on Islam is provided. The authors' interest remains focused on fitting Islam into the theory of the four kingdoms and on finding indications about the advent of the Final End.

Prophecy and false prophecy

While prophecy, as a theological and philosophical subject, relates to areas of the intellectual spectrum far beyond the limits of the present discussion, it also entails a relational aspect pertinent to this chapter's argument. On the one hand, in asserting the superiority of Mosaic prophecy, medieval Jewish authors, either explicitly or otherwise, countered Islamic (and Christian) assertions of prophecy.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, inasmuch as belief in an imminent End of the World entailed the return of prophets, thorough discussion of the proofs accrediting true prophecy became crucial, especially because numerous individuals within all three religious traditions claimed to be recipients of prophetic revelation.

Halevi's concern with prophecy has long been subject to close analysis. As observed earlier in this chapter, many among Halevi's poems describe dreams as the ideal state for the individual to receive divine revelations. In his *Kuzari*, written shortly before he left for the Land of Israel in 1141, he elaborates extensively on prophecy, conceived as ultimate perfection, and on its recipients and imminent return. In the dialogue held between the Khazar king and his Muslim

interlocutor, Halevi makes it clear that Muḥammad could not possibly claim prophecy since he did not perform true miracles.¹²⁰ As is well known, his overall conception of prophecy was heavily influenced by Ismaili–Shiite ideas, as well as broader Sufi tendencies.¹²¹ While Ismaili–Shiite authors argued divine influence (*al-amr al-ilāhī*) was only to be transmitted to a select group (*safwa*) through genealogical succession, Halevi contends that the visible *Shekhinah* will become manifest in a prophet born in this select group, that is, those who are born Jews, and only in the Land of Israel. The invisible *Shekhinah* is with everyone who is Israelite by birth, and who is of virtuous life and pure heart.¹²² On the basis of Ismaili–Shiite ideas, Halevi’s view of the Self is thus highly restricted and exclusive.

Like Halevi, Abraham ibn Daud defends the superiority of Mosaic prophecy in his philosophical treatise *Sefer ha-emunah ha-ramah* (“Book of the Exalted Faith”).¹²³ However, unlike Halevi, he argues that prophecy can be acquired. To be sure, prophecy remains linked to a particular place, time and nation, and Israel has special predisposition to receive prophecy. In spite of these facts, however, other nations can also have prophetic dreams, albeit only by virtue of Israel.

Maimonides’s view of prophecy, like Halevi’s and Ibn Daud’s, has generated much reflection and a vast bibliography of its own. While defending the superiority of Moses’ prophecy, unlike most medieval Jewish authors, Maimonides does not anchor his argument in Moses’ miracles, nor does he require miracles as proof of prophecy.¹²⁴ Furthermore, in contrast to Halevi, he does not restrict prophecy to Israel and does not believe it is transmitted genealogically. On the one hand, he argues, prophets can be Jews or Gentiles; on the other, pseudo-prophets can also appear among Jews. Inasmuch as Islam and Christianity were the product of faux prophets, Maimonides does not hesitate to equate Jewish pseudo-prophets to Muslims and Christians. In his view, there is no doubt that they represent an inherent danger for their community, in that they systematically elicit persecution against it.¹²⁵ In contrast to the highly speculative and highly elitist discussion of prophecy in Halevi, Maimonides appears to adapt his definition of the character of prophecy to the circumstances of his lifetime, as I will discuss further below.

The status of proselytes

Inclusion and exclusion within the domain of prophecy have a parallel in both Halevi and Maimonides when it comes to the discussion of the role of proselytes. The mid-twelfth century bore witness to a significant increase in the number of conversions in al-Andalus and the Maghrib. On the one hand, as I have noted elsewhere, transition toward Christian Iberia had increased the rate of Jewish conversion to either Islam or Christianity. On the other hand, cases of conversion to Judaism are highly unusual, yet not unknown. The handful of cases that the sources transmit correlates, in fact, to periods of high messianic

activity.¹²⁶ With this background in mind, Halevi's concern with the precise status of proselytes in the *Kuzari* does not come as a surprise. Indeed, the Khazar king, the main character of the *Kuzari*, is a proselyte. In Halevi's view, conversion to Judaism is a condition *sine qua non* for those desiring to belong to God and attain salvation, and proselytes share in Israel's good fortune. However, in total accord with his view of community based on the notion of *ṣafwa*, conversion does not make them equal to those who are Israelites by birth.¹²⁷ They are not obliged to migrate to Israel, nor can they be prophets.¹²⁸

Halevi equates those proselytes "who did not accept the whole law in all its branches, but only the fundamental principles" to "members of later religions." While he does not explicitly refer to Muslims, this equation is easy to make as he observes that they only venerate the Land of Prophecy with words, while simultaneously revering places sacred to idols, and worshiping the stone, that is, the Kaaba; moreover, he refers to the change in the *qibla*'s direction.¹²⁹

Maimonides' position regarding proselytes stands in vivid contrast to Halevi's. In his letter to Obadiah, a Christian Norman who converted to Judaism in 1102, he asserts that proselytes are to be considered absolutely equal to those born Jews. A minor distinction between them concerns prayer, as instead of addressing God saying "You delivered us out of Egypt," proselytes are free to say "You delivered Israel out of Egypt."¹³⁰ On the basis of Exodus 22:20, a biblical verse prohibiting wrongdoing against strangers, Maimonides observes that ill treatment of a proselyte violates the Law. In his view, proselytism has a symbolic value because it announces the return toward original monotheism,¹³¹ and hence is a sign of the imminent arrival of the End of Days.¹³²

While Halevi compares proselytes who do not fulfill all commandments to Christians and Muslims and considers the two latter religions idolatrous, although in different degrees, Maimonides rejects the labeling of Islam as idolatry in the following strong terms:

By no means are Muslims idolaters.... They recognized God's unity.... Just because they falsely accuse us of thinking that God has a son, we cannot also lie by saying that they are idolaters.... If someone were to argue that the House where they praise Him is an idolatrous temple that conceals inside the idol their ancestors worshipped, [they must understand] that those who bow to Him now have only God in mind. The rabbis have already explained in *Sanhedrin* that if one bows in an idolatrous temple but believes it is a synagogue, his heart is dedicated to God.¹³³

Thus, while Halevi considers that transition from pre-Islamic to Islamic times has been a matter only of form, which has not changed the idolatrous nature of the Arabs' beliefs and practices, Maimonides believes that contemporary Muslims are unquestionably monotheists, regardless of the origins of the Kaaba and its cult.¹³⁴

The status of apostates

With respect to Jewish conversion to Islam, and as observed above, in pre-Almohad times it appears to have taken place, with different degrees of intensity, on an individual basis.¹³⁵ Under Almohad rule, however, Jews were compelled to convert to Islam en masse¹³⁶ at a time in which messianic expectations were reaching their zenith. This process is most clearly evident in the work of Maimonides and his contemporaries, and especially in the letters he and his father, Maimon ha-Dayyan, sent to various Jewish communities.¹³⁷ Inasmuch as in these letters the author's intention is clearly persuasive, and as far as rhetoric is the very focus of the study at hand, in what follows I will bring three of them under close analysis. All three letters are equally concerned with the status of apostates.

First in chronological order is *Iggeret ha-neḥamah* ("Letter of Consolation"), written in 1160.¹³⁸ In this letter, Maimon ha-Dayyan (d. 1166) portrays the situation of the Jewish communities in the Maghrib as a time of captivity, which he describes as "distressing ... obscure ... severe, without any opportunity for Israel, and without any indication as to its length, either from useful analogy, or by means of correct calculation."¹³⁹ Confronted with this somber framework, he aims at bringing relief and consolation to his contemporaries. First, he argues that Psalm 90, which he attributes to Moses, foretold all great calamities that would befall Israel in the course of history, including the present persecution of the Jews under the Almohads. Second, he contends that, compared to former persecutions, the present one was significantly more lenient, as Jews were not forced to pretend they worshiped idols. The distress the Maghribi Jewish communities were enduring came only as a result of God's corrective, gentle and temporary punishment. With this argument the Dayyan was, in all likelihood, countering Muslim polemical claims on the abrogation of the Torah and the withdrawal of divine favor from Israel. In his view, the present persecution did not imply the withdrawal of God's favor; on the contrary, it had been known to God from the beginning of time and was only temporary.

While in *Iggeret ha-neḥamah* ("Letter of Consolation") the Dayyan does not explicitly refer to the status of those who had been forced to convert, his letter reveals an acute concern with the criteria determining Jewish identity. Thus, he begins his letter by stressing the truthfulness of God, his messengers, and the Torah ("what has been transmitted from generation to generation") as central tenets in Judaism.¹⁴⁰ While performing the Law and obeying the commandments both in private and in public are generally required, the only aspect of the Law that is a true condition for belonging to the Jewish community is prayer. The Dayyan clearly puts forth the need to pray three times a day, a practice that he traces back to the patriarchs.¹⁴¹ Those whose lives are not in danger, he argues, are required to recite the Eighteen Benedictions in their entirety. Those enduring persecution may recite them in an abridged form.¹⁴² Those who neglect prayer, the Dayyan concludes, are like those who separate themselves from religion.

The Dayyan's position on prayer indicates an effort to ease religious obligations. The theological concepts, as well as the language he employs throughout his letter, reveal a similar effort to decrease the distance between Judaism and Islam. The three tenets the Dayyan puts forth at the outset of his letter, as well as the stress he places on prayer, actually mirror major pillars in Islam. Furthermore, he describes Abraham as "the first of the true believers" and *Mahdī*; contends that those who, under persecution, have to recite the shorter version of the Eighteen Benedictions, may do so in Arabic, facing any *qibla* as they pray; and explains at great length the centrality of Moses' prophecy, describing him as *al-nabī al-awwal* ("the first prophet") in a way that could be seen as a parallel to the description of a central, dominant prophetic figure in Islam. Regarding the central role played by Moses in *Iggeret ha-neḥamah*, one has to keep in mind that by the time the letter was written the exaltation and veneration of the prophet Muhammad was taking shape in the Islamic tradition, most notably among Sufis. In describing Moses, actually, the Dayyan indicates that the light his face projected was created out of God's glory, a description reminiscent of the Islamic concept of *nūr Muḥammadi* ("Muhammad's light") common in Sufi texts.¹⁴³

In the years that followed the publication of the Dayyan's letters, the situation of Maghribi Jews deteriorated and the risks for identifying oneself as a Jew increased. Persecution, forced conversion and apocalyptic mentality, in combination, were factors placing the community's survival at unprecedented risk. In his *Iggeret ha-shemad* ("Letter on Forced Conversion"), also known as *Iggeret qiddush ha-shem* ("Letter on Apostasy"), written shortly after his father's, in 1160–61, Maimonides refers to the messianic hopes of his contemporaries, some of which thought the Messiah was about to appear in the Maghrib.¹⁴⁴ This letter, addressed to the Jews of the Maghrib, was presumably written in response to an unidentified rabbi, who had been circulating a letter in which he criticized the mounting number of Jewish apostates and called for martyrdom.¹⁴⁵

Following in the footsteps of his father, in his letter Maimonides places the present historical situation in the perspective of previous, harsher persecutions, and aims to provide consolation by recalling the times when the community transgressed yet God remained by its side.¹⁴⁶ He explicitly soothes messianic anxiety by remarking that there is no set time for the time of the Messiah, his coming being incumbent upon studying the Torah and fulfilling the precepts. This being accomplished, God might give their generation the privilege to witness the messianic era, a time when life would become more pleasant.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, in response to apostasy, he continues his father's efforts at preventing the permanent severance of converts' ties to the Jewish community.¹⁴⁸ His representation of Islam in *Iggeret ha-shemad* is to be understood within this specific historical framework. Throughout the letter, Maimonides does not refer to Muḥammad by name, but rather with the vague expression "that man;" neither does he describe Islam in derogatory terms. On the contrary, in comparing "this persecution" to former persecutions he acknowledges "there has never been a

persecution as remarkable as this one, where the only coercion is to say something.”¹⁴⁹ This means that Jews were only compelled to recite the *shahāda*, what was generally understood, by both Muslims¹⁵⁰ and Jews, as a matter of mere speech due to the hardships of persecution. This vague yet somewhat benevolent characterization of Islam in *Iggeret ha-shemad* stands in vivid contrast to that of the rabbi whose letter had elicited Maimonides’ response. From Maimonides’ letter it may be inferred that the unknown rabbi had described Islam as idolatry, and had charged Muḥammad with the killing of twenty-four thousand Jews.

As argued in *Iggeret ha-neḥamah*, reciting the *shahāda* and keeping faithful to the Jewish faith in secret was legitimate, yet migration was always recommended.¹⁵¹ In short, while Halevi had a concept of the Self as exclusively restricted to those who were Jews by birth, Maimonides extended it not only to proselytes but to those Jews who, having been forced to convert, continued to study and fulfill the commandments in secret.

Maimonides addresses very similar challenges to those described in the *Iggeret ha-shemad* in a second, famous letter addressed to the Jewish community of Yemen, presumably written some years later, when the author was already in Egypt. This letter, written in Arabic so that everyone could read it with ease, was a response to Jacob ben Nathanel Fayyumi, Nagid of Yemen, who had requested Maimonides’ guidance regarding matters relating to the persecution launched against his community by the Yemenite ruler. Ben Nathanel reports that as a result of this pressure, and of the delay in the coming of the Messiah, the faith of Yemenite Jews was weakening and their hopes for restoration gone. He also requests Maimonides’ opinion regarding a Jewish pseudo-Messiah who had arisen in their midst. Maimonides, who equates the situation the Jews in Yemen are enduring with that of Maghribi Jews under Almohad rule, graphically describes their current times as the birth pangs of the Messiah. Throughout the letter, Maimonides argues that all the characteristics of their present situation – distress, loss of faith, apostasy, even the rise of pseudo-Messiahs – are in agreement with prophetic descriptions of the time preceding the messianic era. As his father did in *Iggeret ha-neḥamah*, he argues that God has known how all current events would unfold since the beginning of history.¹⁵²

Within the chain of tyrants who have subjugated Israel throughout history, Islam and Christianity are united in a common effort to annihilate Israel. They combine two distinct forms of oppression that had existed only separately prior to the arrival of these faiths – conquest and polemics. Muḥammad, to whom he explicitly refers in the letter as “madman,” would have merely “emulated the precursor who had paved the way for him, but he added the further objective of procuring rule and obedience and he invented his notorious religion.”¹⁵³

Islam is described as fulfilling biblical prophecy, that is, as the fourth empire about to be destroyed, hence the hardship indicated in the description. “On the account of the vast number of our sins,” he states, “God has hurled us into the midst of this people, the Arabs, who have persecuted us severely, and passed baneful and discriminatory legislation against us.... Never did a nation molest,

degrade, debase, and hate us as much as they, [Arabs, have].”¹⁵⁴ The Jews’ abasement and subjection to Arabs, he says, is best expressed in the biblical verse, “Woe is me, that I live with Meshekha, that I dwell among the clans of Cedar.”¹⁵⁵

Both Christians and Muslims claimed to be equal to Israel, and indeed, similarities between their respective religions and Judaism could not be denied. However, these similarities were due to the fact that they were imitators of Israel. Their respective leaders had messianic and prophetic aspirations but these lacked any basis whatsoever. The existence of biblical passages accounting for the veracity of Muhammad’s prophecy was merely a fantasy. It was only Jewish apostates to Islam who entertained that idea, he claims, since not even Muslims gave any credence to it. On the basis of *gematria* and other exegetical techniques, they misled people in thinking that passages such as Deuteronomy 33:2 (“The Lord came from Sinai; He shone upon them from Se’ir; He appeared from Mount Paran”),¹⁵⁶ Deuteronomy 18:15 (“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people like myself; him you shall heed”), and Genesis 17:20 (“As for Ishmael … I will make him exceedingly numerous”)¹⁵⁷ announced Muhammad’s mission.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Maimonides asserts that because the pretension that the Bible foretold Muhammad’s prophecy was unsustainable, Jewish apostates concluded that the Bible must have been corrupted. In Maimonides’ view, the fact that the Torah had been translated into many languages over the years, in both the East and the West, with no textual variants or inconsistencies, was enough to account for its unbroken chain of transmission.¹⁵⁹

After having presented Islam as the fourth kingdom foreseen by Daniel, and having refuted Islamic polemical arguments, Maimonides calls for enduring exile in silence.¹⁶⁰ In fact, he compares the suffering of Israel in the present with a sacrifice to God. Affliction is meant to test and purify the community. Those who can leave the land of persecution should do so, but if they were forced to remain in it, they would have to abide by the Law. He is clearly against any attempt to bring about the End of Days, and is also against the claims of pseudo-Messiahs. His attitude is, again, consistently anti-apocalyptic.¹⁶¹

When compared to *Iggeret ha-shemad*, the letter Maimonides sent to the Jews of Yemen conveys a much more critical representation of Islam. This difference has often been attributed to the fact that the author had already left the Maghrib by the time he wrote it. The striking contrast between the attitudes toward Islam in both letters can, alternatively, be explained in purely rhetorical terms. In *Iggeret ha-shemad* Maimonides meant to include forced converts who continue to be loyal to Judaism in secret within the Jewish community. Hence, he highlights the leniency of the present persecution, which, unlike all prior ones, does not entail idolatry. All historical paradigms employed in the letter are meant to provide proof of the sages and even of God’s mercy with those forced to convert. *Iggeret Teman*, in turn, is driven by a similar intent to provide consolation. In this letter, however, consolation is offered on the basis of the imminent

coming of the End. Accordingly, Islam is portrayed within the parameters of the fourth kingdom described in Daniel. The present persecution cannot possibly be lenient. On the contrary, it represents the climax of distress that characterizes the days prior to the Final End, the very “birth pangs of the Messiah.”

Throughout this chapter I have presented eschatological speculation as a central discourse defining identity and determining the relationship between Self and Other in medieval Jewish sources. From the view point of the socio-political context surrounding the production of the texts under analysis, all sociological scenarios presented in this chapter find, in fact, analogues among the socio-political frameworks contemplated in Talmon’s studies on the possible conditions giving rise to social change, published in the 1960s.¹⁶² First, at the risk of oversimplification, Jewish communities benefited from fairly stable socio-political and economic conditions during the Caliphate, and well through the end of the Taifa period. However, it is likely that this stability also created further expectations that could not possibly be fulfilled. Both Ibn Shatprut’s inquiry on the date of the End and Ibn Nagrīlah’s hopes for the restoration of Zion did take place, then, at a time when there was an uneven relationship between improvement in living conditions and the hopes raised by those conditions. Second, the arrival of the Almoravids to the Peninsula brought about rapid change and sudden contact with a radically different system of values. At this juncture, situated as the Jews were between the Arabo-Islamic and Christian worlds, the sense of cultural deprivation and loss must have been crucial in stirring messianic hopes. Finally, the Almohad period was a time of forced conversion and oppression without precedents for those Jews living in al-Andalus and in the Maghrib. At that time anxiety for the prompt arrival of the End arose “against the background of disaster,” to put it in Talmon’s terms.¹⁶³

Going beyond this causal level of analysis, and regarding the rhetoric of texts, in this chapter I have explored eschatological rhetoric in a wide range of literary genres. In pre-Almoravid times, messianic hopes are at the core of liturgical poetry. When found in secular poetry or prose they are mostly metaphorical projections intended to praise the patron or the poet himself. By the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, apocalyptic elements become pervasive in liturgical poetry and may also be found in secular poems, such as those written by Halevi shortly before he left the Peninsula. In these instances, and unlike what occurred in pre-Almoravid times, the use of eschatological and, particularly, apocalyptic elements is not a metaphorical projection, but an account in an eschatological code of the confrontation taking place between Christians and Muslims in the Peninsula. At the same time, speculation on the End of Time becomes prevalent in other genres, some of them new among Sephardic Jews. *Megillat ha-megalleh*, written by Abraham bar Ḥiyya’ in the early twelfth century is worth noting in this regard, since it mainly focuses on the establishment of reliable predictions on the Final End. Furthermore, the risks that the forced conversion imposed by the Almohads on *dhimmīs* entailed for communal

Jewish identity, turned *responsa* into a new venue for eschatology related matters.

The confrontation between Self and Other, which is rooted in issues of power and authority, is central to the eschatological-national narrative. The Other comes to fulfill the biblical narrative as antagonist of Israel. Emphasis on similarities and differences between Christians and Muslims in the eschatological discourse is entirely dependant on historical circumstances and on the strategy of consolation that is pursued. Historical paradigms are systematically used in all genres to explain and justify the present balance of power and guarantee that it will soon come to an end. The Other's fate is to become powerless and often severely punished. By representing the reversal of power about to take place as the End draws near, poets, biblical commentators, and community leaders were able rhetorically to invert the relationship between Self and Other in the present. While sometimes considered a factor favoring communal disintegration, eschatological speculation contributed, in fact, to the cohesion and stability of the community.

Because proselytes and converts represent an inherent danger for the stability of the divides between Self and Other, discussion on their status became crucial in the eschatological-national discourse. As argued in the last pages of this chapter, positions clash on this matter, and alternate between exclusive and inclusive solutions. The former increase the distance between Judaism and Islam; the latter close the gap between the two religious traditions.

AFTERWORD

In this study, I have examined closely a neglected aspect of cultural contact in medieval Iberia – the representation of Muslims and Islamic culture in Jewish sources written roughly between the tenth and the late twelfth centuries. Rather than noting similarities and differences between the Jewish minority and the host Andalusi Muslim society amid which the Jews lived, I have called attention to instances in which Jewish authors drew explicit distinctions between themselves and their host society.

While the numerous tensions and contradictions in the representation that I have repeatedly noted defy any generalized conclusion, several patterns and features also emerge that are worth reviewing. Despite the fact that otherness did not constitute a dominant discourse in medieval Jewish sources written in the period under examination, there were significant domains in which it was invoked, always as a political category that aims to overturn a hierarchy of pre-eminence and status between Jewish and Muslim societies.

The four chapters in this book introduce two different domains of representation, each unfolding over two chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 constitute a pair devoted to language and to the more general world of learning, while Chapters 3 and 4 constitute another pair devoted to the specifics of Jewish life among Muslims (and Christians), an existence that was conceptualized by Jews as an exile proceeding toward a final redemption. It must be noted that these two domains do not correspond to cultural and religious identities respectively, as this distinction was not operative in the period under analysis. Religious polemics do not constitute a main domain in the interaction between Muslims and Jews in the period under analysis. However, the two discourses presented in this book – language and the world of learning and exile/redemption – present, at times, polemical undertones, most notably in sources written in the Hispanic kingdoms.

If we consider Chapters 1 and 2 together, a contrast is revealed between language (examined in Chapter 1) and other aspects in the realm of learning (examined in Chapter 2). The emphasis on otherness as a way to subvert the hierarchy of prestige takes place predominantly in the realm of language. Hence, while the authors of the texts under analysis, as well as early medieval Jewish society in

general, were highly Arabized, in their representation of language they did not embrace bilingualism but strongly identified with Hebrew as opposed to Arabic. In clear contrast to the explicit identification with Hebrew over Arabic, hardly any opposition was registered regarding other disciplines that were part of Islamic culture. Moreover, in establishing the criteria of intellectual excellence, proficiency in both Arabic and Hebrew was, acknowledged, admired, and promoted. In the discourse on language, the opponent was disregarded and excluded by virtue of his identification with Christians. In terms of culture, however, Muslims and Christians were perceived as worthy adversaries, who served to validate the superiority of Jewish authors within the various domains of a shared cultural world. When opposition arose, it actually duplicated similar reactions in the Arabo-Islamic milieu.

In Chapters 3 and 4, the theological pair exile/redemption created a framework within which Muslims were predominantly conceptualized as an Other in Jewish sources. This strong association of Muslims (and Christians) as enemies, on the one hand, and Jewish existence within a host society as a time of exile, on the other, worked in conjunction with a much more restricted and marginal representation of Muslims (and Christians) as neighbors and al-Andalus as domicile. Identification with al-Andalus and Arabic culture is found in the work of authors who, like Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, migrated to Christian territory with the arrival of the Almoravids and Almohads.

Both in the domain of language and in the theological conceptualization of present and future as exile and redemption, opposition to the Other was predicated upon metaphorical projections. The creative, cognitive character of metaphor had the power to re-describe reality and subvert the existing order, as evinced in Samuel ha-Nagid’s war poems, for example. In the context of a military conflict between the Grenadine army and those of the neighboring Taifas, the Nagid metaphorically portrayed a battle of biblical proportions, fraught with apocalyptic overtones, between Israel and Israel’s enemies. Moreover, metaphor facilitated the relationship between individual and collective identities. Hence, by projecting the relationship between God and the Jewish community as described in liturgical poetry onto the relationship between the patron and the poet, or the poet and the Jewish community, many poets gave collective overtones to individual relationships.

Chronology runs parallel in all four chapters. A clear point of inflection in the representation under examination was the exodus of the Andalusi Jewish communities toward the Hispanic kingdoms that began to take place after 1086. This transition had an effect on the attitude toward Arabic language, with the most adversarial reactions taking place in Christian territory. It also brought about a trend in othering certain areas of the Andalusi Jewish tradition that would eventually be identified as Ishmaelite practices. Similarly, with the transition from al-Andalus to the Northern kingdoms, frameworks pertaining mainly to liturgical poetry that opposed Jews, on the one hand, and Muslims and Christians, on the other, began to appear in other genres. Several factors seem to have

played a role in this shift. On the one hand, Jewish scholars, and by extension, the Jewish population living in the Hispanic kingdoms might have been trying to avoid being identified with the beleaguered Mudejars; on the other they familiarized themselves with Christian anti-Islamic polemics, and became engaged in that polemical adversarial attitude toward Muslims and Islam.

In addition to literary conventions, and to other chronological and geographical considerations, throughout all four chapters, I have also indicated the author's intentions as a crucial element of the analysis. Hence, I have presented texts in which differences between the Jews and their neighbors were declared. There are times when differences were brought into the text to counter a polemical argument. In this regard, when Bahya ibn Paqudah, in the eleventh century, calls his audience to consider *objectively* the relatively better situation of his contemporary fellow Jews among Gentiles, he clearly does so in order to silence those who contend that the Jews have been left without God's protection, as evinced by their abased situation among the nations.

This polemical intent, present in many texts, is closely related to the underlying goal of bringing consolation to the community. This goal is clearly manifest, for example, in Maimonides's letters. As I have argued in Chapter 4, Maimonides portrays Islam in a generic, even benevolent way in his *Iggeret ha-shemad*, as he tries to bring consolation to his community by arguing that the persecution they endure in the Maghrib is lenient, when compared to all former persecutions. In his *Iggeret Teman*, written a few years later, however, Maimonides asserts that no nation has ever persecuted the Jews as harshly as Muslims have. In this latter case, Islam is made to fit the description of the fourth evil kingdom described in the Book of Daniel. By emphasizing the cruelty of the last kingdom, Maimonides means to bring hope to the Yemenite community by presenting the present as the "birth pangs of the Messiah," implying that the End – a non-apocalyptic End, in his view – is drawing near. Needless to say, the overall purpose of providing consolation was not just found in *responsa*, but in a wide range of literary genres. It is clearly the primary intent in liturgical poetry, and also the recognized major goal in Abraham ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, and Abraham bar Ḥiyya's *Megillat ha-megalleh*.

Throughout this study, it has become increasingly apparent that the attitudes toward Muslims are intertwined with attitudes toward Christians in numerous and complex ways. In the tenth century, within the context of the conflict regarding the legitimacy of comparing Arabic with Hebrew and the adoption of Arabic meters in Hebrew poetry, both Menahem's and Dunash's students exclude each other by identifying their opponent with Christians. Within the same domain of language in the thirteenth century, al-Harizi describes the relationship between Arabic and Hebrew by way of the relationship between Hagar and Sarah. I have suggested that al-Harizi might well have internalized the Christian understanding of Hagar and Sarah as a metaphorical description of the rapport between Jews and Christians – he in turn employed it to portray interaction between Muslims and Jews, and between Arabic and Hebrew. In the

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domain of exile and domicile, Jewish sources often describe Muslims and Christians as an indissoluble Other; however, signs of religious otherness are assigned most of the time to Christians, rather than to Muslims. Interestingly, the religious otherness of Muslims becomes more prominent in the work of Jewish authors writing from Christian territory.

GLOSSARY

Adab The mastery of poetry, oratory, the historical and tribal traditions of the ancient Arabs, and also the corresponding sciences – rhetoric, grammar, lexicography, and metrics.

'Aliyah Jewish immigration to Israel.

Almohads Exponents of a reformist movement characterized by its call to recognize the divine oneness, who ruled in North Africa and al-Andalus after the Almoravids, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Almoravids A Berber dynasty that ruled in North Africa and then al-Andalus during the second half of the eleventh century and the first part of the twelfth century.

'Amidah (lit. standing) Central prayer of all four daily services in Judaism.

Amīr al-mu'minīn Commander of the Believers. Title first adopted by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644) after having been elected caliph. The first ruler to adopt the title in al-Andalus was 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (d. 961).

Arabiyya A movement upholding the supremacy of the Arabs, their lifestyle and their culture.

Dhimma The contract through which the Islamic authorities accord hospitality and protection to members of other revealed religions.

Dhimmī Beneficiary of the *dhimma* status.

Dīwān A collection of poetry or prose; a register.

Fatwā A legal opinion.

Fitna Arabic word often translated as civil war, disagreement, and division. In al-Andalus, it specifically alluded to the civil war that took place from 1009 until 1031, after the fall of the Caliphate.

Galut Exile.

Gematria Hermeneutical rule that consists of explaining a word or group of words according to the numerical value of their Hebrew letters.

Ge'ullah Redemption. In a more restricted sense, the term refers to a particular type of *Piyyut*.

Gaon (pl. Geonim) The formal title of the heads of the academies of Sura and Pumbedita, in Babylonia.

Hadīth Traditions relating to the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ḩājib Chamberlain; a title in the Islamic court.

Halakhah The legal side of Judaism, as distinct from aggadah, the non-legal side.

Hijra (abridged h.) The emigration of Muḥammad and his followers from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina) in 622.

Hisba An institution that sought to ensure correct economic and commercial practice, especially in the markets.

Ismaili A member of a specific branch of Shiism.

Jāhiliyya State of affairs in Arabia before the time of Muḥammad.

Karaites A Jewish sectarian group that came into being at the beginning of the eighth century. They differed from the rabbinic mainstream tradition in that they denied the talmudic-rabbinic tradition.

Khazars Central European group that is said to have converted to Judaism, and to have been independent roughly between the seventh and the tenth centuries.

Jihād Military action whose purpose is the expansion or defense of Islam.

Madīh In Arabic literature, poetry of praise. Also, the central part in the polythematic *qaṣīda*.

Mahdī A restorer of religion and justice who, according to Islamic tradition, is expected to rule before the end of the world.

Maqāma (lit. assembly) Classical Arabic literary genre that is comprised of collections of short independent stories written in rhymed prose with verse insertions.

Masorah (lit. tradition) In a technical sense, the term refers to traditions concerned with the reading of the biblical text.

Mishnah Collection of Oral Torah, or Jewish legal and non-legal traditions, compiled about 200.

Mozarabs Christians living in al-Andalus under Islamic rule.

Mudejars Muslims living in the Hispanic kingdoms under Christian rule.

Nagid (lit. prince) A title used by Jewish communal leaders in the Middle Ages. There were *negidim* in al-Andalus, Kairouan, Egypt, and Yemen.

Nasīb First structural unit in the polythematic *qaṣīda*.

Piyyūt (pl. *piyyūṭim*; adj. payyetanic) A lyrical composition intended to embellish an obligatory prayer or any other religious ceremony.

Qahtānīs South Arabian peoples.

Qaṣīda Polythematic poem with identical meter and rhyme.

Qibla The direction of Mecca, toward which the worshipper must direct himself for prayer.

Reconquista Long process by which the rulers of the Hispanic kingdoms conquered the Iberian territory under Islamic control.

Safwa A lineage of chosen individuals.

Shahāda The Muslim declaration of belief, which states “There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.”

Shekhinah (lit. dwelling) The Divine Presence.

G L O S S A R Y

Shema The liturgy stating God's unity in Judaism. It begins with the verse "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Shiite A member of the branch of Islam that regards 'Alī and his descendants as legitimate successors to Muḥammad.

Shu'ubiyya A movement within early Muslim society that denied the supremacy of Arabs.

Sufism Islamic mysticism.

Sunni A member of the branch of Islam that accepts the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muḥammad.

Sūra One of the 114 independent units or chapters of the Qur'ān.

Taifa (lit. group or party) In al-Andalus, one of the independent Muslim principalities in which the Caliphate was divided in 1031.

Urim* and *tummim Objects connected with the breastplate of the high priest in ancient Israel, and used as a kind of divine oracle.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Although the representation of Christians, Christianity, and Romance cultures is outside the scope of this investigation, I will often refer to it, as it is intertwined with that of Muslims and Islamic culture. Likewise, I will occasionally refer to the opposition to the Jewish sectarian group of the Karaites as recorded in the sources.
- 2 See Margarita del Olmo Pintado, “Una teoría para el análisis de la identidad cultural,” *Arbor* 147, no. 579 (1994): 77–97. As many other categories in the social sciences describing relationships between groups, such as symbiosis, co-evolution, and hybridity, to give only a few examples, the term “otherness” is a loan from biology. See Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, eds Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 3–48.
- 3 The numerous ways in which the term has been understood since the nineteenth century in different fields defy any attempt to provide a universal definition. For the use of term in this book, see below, 122, note 24.
- 4 This use of the term “discourse,” as an institutionalized way of thinking, or as a way of understanding human experience that is bound to a particular discipline, owes much to Michel Foucault.
- 5 See George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, 2nd edn (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999). For two diametrically opposed readings on the question of the Other in anthropology, see Johannes Fabian, “Presence and Representation: The Other and Anthropological Writing,” *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (1990): 753–72; Michael Richardson, “Enough Said: Reflections on Orientalism,” *Anthropology Today* 6, no. 4 (1990): 16–19.
- 6 Hayden White’s work is pioneering in this regard. See *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
- 7 In general, these studies use the term Sephardic to designate Judaism in an Islamic context. In order to prevent confusion elsewhere I will use the term Andalusi Jews, rather than Sephardic, to distinguish the Jewish population living in al-Andalus from that settled in the northern Hispanic kingdoms in the Peninsula. I use the term Sephardic Jews to refer to the Jews of the whole Peninsula as opposed to their Ashkenazi, North African or Eastern counterparts. Other scholars distinguish Hispanic Jews, that is, those living in the Hispanic kingdoms before 1492, from Sephardic Jews, that is Jews from Iberian background after 1492.
- 8 Ismar Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year-*

book 34 (1989): 47–66. See also Nahum N. Glatzer, “The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Studies,” in *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 27–45; David N. Myers, “The Ideology of Wissenschaft des Judentums,” in *Routledge History of World Philosophies*, vol. 2, *History of Jewish Philosophy*, eds Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1997), 706–20; Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif, “The Study of Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages: Major Trends and Goals,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 248–51. This use of the past also holds true in nineteenth-century Jewish studies in France. See Jay Berkovitz, “Jewish Scholarship and Identity in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Modern Judaism* 18, no. 1 (1998): 1–33.

9 All my remarks on the connections between the writing of history and nationalism in Spain are very much indebted to: Aurora Rivièr Gómez, *Orientalismo y nacionalismo español: Estudios árabes y hebreos en la Universidad de Madrid (1843–1868)* (Madrid: Instituto Antonio de Nebrija de estudios sobre la universidad, 2000) and Eduardo Manzano Moreno, “La construcción histórica del pasado nacional,” in *La gestión de la memoria: La historia de España al servicio del poder*, eds Juan Sisino Pérez Garzón et al. (Barcelona: Crítica, 2000), 33–62 and “La creación de un esencialismo: La historia de al-Andalus en la visión del Arabismo español,” in *Orientalismo, exotismo, y traducción*, eds Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla and Manuel C. Feria García (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000), 23–38. In their respective studies Rivièr and Manzano argue that Spanish Arabists, unlike European Orientalists, distanced themselves from the colonial enterprise. Along the same lines, see Bernabé López García, “Arabismo y orientalismo en España: Radiografía y diagnóstico de un gremio escaso y apartadizo,” in “Actas del Ciclo de Conferencias ‘Africanismo y Orientalismo español’,” special issue, *Awrāq Anejo* al vol. 11 (1990): 35–69. In English, James T. Monroe’s *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship: Sixteenth Century to the Present* (Leiden: Brill, 1970) continues to be valuable in spite of having been published more than thirty years ago. The ways in which nineteenth-century Spanish historians were influenced by contemporary Anglo-Saxon historiography has also been studied. See, for example, Mercedes García-Arenal, “Historiens de l’Espagne, historiens du Maghreb au 19^e siècle: Comparaisons des stéréotypes,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 54, no. 3 (1999), 687–703.

10 Needless to say, my emphasis on the ideological aspects of nineteenth-century scholarship is by no means intended to belittle the enormous bibliographical, linguistic, editorial and historical efforts undertaken in that period by scholars who established the pillars of scientific study in a wide array of fields.

11 See Mark R. Cohen, “Islam and the Jews: Myth, Counter-Myth, History,” *JQ* 38 (1986): 125–37; reprint. in *The Solomon Goldman Lectures*, vol. 5, eds Byron L. Sherwin and Michael Carasik (Chicago, IL: The Spertus College of Judaic Press, 1990), 20–32; Hebrew trans. in *Zemanim* 9, no. 36 (1990): 52–61; revised Hebrew version in *Muslim Authors on Jews and Judaism: The Jews among their Muslim Neighbours* [in Hebrew], ed. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1996), 21–36. See also his article “The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish–Arab History,” *Tikkun* 6, no. 3 (1991): 55–60 and Norman A. Stillman’s response in the same volume (“Myth, Countermyth, and Distortion: (A Response to Mark R. Cohen),” *Tikkun* 6, no. 3 (1991): 60–4). The exchange would be pursued in Mark R. Cohen, Yossi Yonah, and Norman Stillman, “Revisionist Jewish–Arab History: An Exchange,” *Tikkun* 6, no. 4 (1991): 96–7.

12 Juan Sisino Pérez Garzón (“El debate nacional en España: Ataduras y ataderos del romanticismo medievalizante,” in *Italia-España: Viejos y nuevos problemas históricos*, ed. Juan C. Gay Armenteros (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999): 159–76) argues that

both historiographical tendencies see themselves as restoring traditions that would have defined the specifics of the nation in the past. Emblematic of this national debate was the so much aired up opposition between the Spanish historians Claudio Sánchez Albornoz and Américo Castro. See Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs*, 253–63.

13 See Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif, “The Study of Hebrew Literature,” 253. In the articles quoted in 119, note 11, Mark R. Cohen traces the evolution of the myth of the Golden Age and the various responses it elicited throughout most of the twentieth century, within an Islamic-Jewish sphere. In “Hidden Worlds and Open Shutters: S. D. Goitein between Judaism and Islam,” in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, eds David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 163–98, Gideon Libson points out Goitein’s fascination for the “Eastern man” and his disengagement from the Western world. Goitein’s paradigm of a creative symbiosis between Islam and Judaism remains largely uncontested. On this paradigm, see Steven M. Wasserstrom, “Recent Works on the ‘Creative Symbiosis’ of Judaism and Islam,” *Religious Studies Review* 16, no. 1 (1990): 43–7. For responses to the myth of a Sephardic mystique among scholars of Ashkenazi Judaism, see Ivan G. Marcus, “Beyond the Sephardic Mystique,” *Orim* 1 (1985): 35–53.

14 For medieval Iberia, anthropological theoretical frameworks by and large have been applied only marginally in the study of medieval societies. Among the exceptions are Julio Caro Baroja’s study of minorities (see Francisco Castilla Urbano, “El análisis histórico y antropológico de las minorías en la obra de Julio Caro Baroja,” in “Homenaje a Julio Caro Baroja,” special issue, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 533–4 (1994): 83–98); Thomas F. Glick and Oriol Pi-Sunyer’s call for a study based on the anthropological framework of acculturation (“Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969): 136–54); and Gerson D. Cohen’s analysis of a story included in a twelfth-century Sephardic chronicle (“The Story of the Four Captives,” *PAAJR* 29 (1960–61): 55–131). For Ashkenaz, see Ivan G. Marcus, “Medieval Jewish Studies: Toward an Anthropological History of the Jews,” in *The State of Jewish Studies*, eds Shaye J. D. Cohen and Edward L. Greenstein (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 113–27. The term “acculturation” that most of these studies use to define a narrowing of the cultural gap between two groups in contact is widely attested in scholarship from the 1950s and 1960s. The term, also common in American anthropology until fairly recently, has been rendered obsolete, being replaced by the more general “cultural contact.” The only significant advantage of the latter, in my view, is that it precludes the assumption that cultures are bounded, defined entities, and that acculturation operates as a wholesale process in all social and cultural domains or areas of experience.

15 As early as 1976, coinciding with the political transition from dictatorship to democracy, Mikel de Epalza stated that the debate on ontological essence was seen as outdated among Spanish Arabists (“Les études arabes en Espagne: Institutions, chercheurs, publications,” *Annuaire de l’Afrique du Nord* 15 (1976): 1015–29).

16 For a complete critical survey on the evolution of comparative literary research, see Rosen and Yassef, “The Study of Hebrew Literature,” 258ff. This survey illustrates how conclusions based upon literary texts have shaped our understanding of medieval cultural contact between Jews and Christians. Very interesting as well are Ángel Sáenz-Badillo’s reflections in “El estudio de la poesía y la prosa hispanohебrea en los últimos cincuenta años,” *MEAH* 50 (2001): 133–61.

17 Exemplary in this regard are all works by Arie Schippers, Raymond P. Scheindlin, Ross Brann and Israel Levin, listed in the Bibliography.

18 In addition to the aforementioned works by Scheindlin and Brann, see Rina Drory’s

studies, also included in the Bibliography. As the idea of “influence” continues to recede in literary studies, in comparative religion Steven Wasserstrom has additionally advocated laying aside the concept of “cultural borrowing.” Although based on the early Islamic period and not on al-Andalus, his book *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) is a good example of his method.

- 19 See, for example, in chronological order, Abraham S. Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude toward Hebrew,” in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. Alexander Altman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 233–48; Salo W. Baron, “Some Medieval Jewish Attitudes to the Muslim State,” in *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History: Essays by Salo Wittmayer Baron*, ed. Leon A. Feldman (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 77–94; Paul B. Fenton, “Jewish Attitudes to Islam: Israel Heeds Ishmael,” *JQ* 29 (1983): 84–102; Howard Kreisel, “Maimonides on Christianity and Islam,” in *Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, vol. 3, *Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Ronald A. Brauner (Philadelphia, PA: Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, 1985), 153–62; David Novak, “The Treatment of Islam and Muslims in the Legal Writings of Maimonides,” in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions: Papers Presented at the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, Center for Judaic Studies, University of Denver*, eds William M. Brinner and Stephen D. Ricks (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 1:233–50; Ronald C. Kiener, “The Image of Islam in the *Zohar*,” in “The Age of the Zohar: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism,” ed. J. Dan, special issue, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 8 (1989): 43*–65*; Eliezer Schlossberg, “The Attitude of Maimonides Towards Islam” [in Hebrew], *Pe’amim* 42 (Winter 1990): 38–60; Daniel J. Lasker, “Proselyte Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Thought of Judah Halevi,” *JQR* n.s., 81, nos 1–2 (1990): 75–92 and “Saadya Gaon on Christianity and Islam,” in *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society and Identity; Proceedings of an International Conference Held by the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, 1992*, ed. Daniel Frank (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 165–77; Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Al-Harizi’s Astrologer: A Document of Jewish-Islamic Relations,” in *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*, ed. Ronald L. Nettler (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers/Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1993), 1:165–75; William M. Brinner, “The Image of the Jew as *Other* in Medieval Arabic Texts,” *IOS* 14 (1994): 227–40; Bernard Septimus, “Hispano-Jewish Views of Christendom and Islam,” in *In Iberia and Beyond: Hispanic Jews Between Cultures; Proceedings of a Symposium to Mark the 500th Anniversary of the Expulsion of Spanish Jewry*, ed. Bernard D. Cooperman (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998), 43–65. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to give an idea of how issues of representation have been addressed by specific authors, within different disciplines and from a wide range of methodological perspectives.
- 20 This silence has been generally related to the status of religious minorities living in Islamic territory, according to which any statement perceived as an insult against Muhammad, Muslims, or Islam, was to be punished by death.
- 21 Tova Rosen, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
- 22 Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- 23 For Ashkenaz, see Ivan G. Marcus, “Jews and Christians Imagining the Other in Medieval Europe,” *Prooftexts* 15, no. 3 (1995): 209–26. For issues of visual representation both in Ashkenaz and Sepharad, see the articles included in Eva

Frojmovic, ed., *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

- 24 Throughout this book the expression “Islamic culture,” as stated in the title, denotes Islam as a religion and Arabic culture. I will make the difference explicit, as I will deem it pertinent. As for the content of the term culture, given the nature of the early Jewish source material available to us, it remains mostly restricted to the literary production of an élite.
- 25 Beginning with the work of I. A. Richards (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936)) and Max Black (*Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962)) on the philosophy of rhetoric, the distinction in classical rhetoric between literal and figurative meaning has become progressively challenged. These two authors must be given credit for arriving at a new approach that illuminates the capacity of rhetoric to create meaning.
- 26 The understanding of *topoi* as primary material for the analysis of attitudes is very clearly articulated in Rosen’s introduction to her book on gender issues in the Middle Ages. See above, 121, note 21.
- 27 As formulated in cognitive linguistics and anthropology, the term “domain” describes a particular area of experience for which we have a specific descriptive language.
- 28 Although there is a polemical side to these four domains, religious polemics as such do not constitute a major discourse articulating the relationship between Jews and Muslims in al-Andalus. No Jewish polemical treatise against Islam from the Andalus period, if ever written, has survived. The Muslim polymath Ibn Ḥazm, however, in his *Al-radd ‘alā Ibn al-Naghrlah al-yahūdī* (“Response against Ibn al-Naghrlah, the Jew”), responded to a Jewish scholar who had allegedly written a polemical tract against Islam. The existence of this text, which is not extant, and its authorship, traditionally attributed to the eleventh-century grammarian and poet Samuel ibn Naghrīlah, is a matter of scholarly controversy. See Emilio García Gómez, “Polémica religiosa entre Ibn Ḥazm e Ibn al-Naghrlá,” *Al-Andalus* 4, no. 1 (1936): 1–28; Roger Arnáldez, “Controverse d’Ibn Hazm contre Ibn Nagrila le juif,” *ROMM* 13–14 (1973): 41–8; Maribel Fierro, “Ibn Ḥazm et le *zindiq* juif,” *REMM* 63–4, no. 1 (1992): 81–9; Camilla Adang, *Islam frente a Judaísmo: La polémica de Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones; Cordova: Diputación Provincial de Córdoba (Área de cultura), 1994); Gabriel Martínez Gros, “Ibn Hazm contre les juifs: Un bouc émissaire jusqu’au jugement dernier,” *Atalaya* 5 (1994): 123–34. As for polemical statements in defense of the correct transmission and veracity of Judaism in medieval Jewish sources, these could be addressed to Muslims, but also Karaites and Christians.

1 ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE: HEBREW VIS-À-VIS ARABIC

- 1 As quoted in Kwame A. Appiah, “Race,” in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1990), 284–5.
- 2 Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (Pasig City: Anvil, 2003), 13.
- 3 The concepts of “nationalism,” and even “patriotism,” are not foreign to scholarship on medieval Judaism. Examples of their use are Ron Barkai, “Identification of the Spanish Jewry with Eretz Israel in the Face of Patriotic Feelings of Christians and Muslims in Medieval Spain” [in Hebrew], in *Proceedings of the Eighth WCJS (Jerusalem, August 16–21, 1981)*, division B, *The History of the Jewish People*, ed.

World Union of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem, 1982), 39–46; Hayyim H. Ben-Sasson, “Jewish Reflections on Nationhood in the Twelfth Century” [in Hebrew], *Peraqim* 2 (1969): 145–218; Norman Roth, “Maimonides as Spaniard: National Consciousness of a Medieval Jew,” in *Sobre la vida y obra de Maimónides: I Congreso Internacional, Córdoba 1985*, ed. Jesús Peláez del Rosal (Cordova: El Almendro, 1991), 463–72, reprint. in Roth, *Maimonides: Essays and Texts; 850th Anniversary*, ed. Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies (Madison, WI, 1985), 139–53. In this chapter I do not intend to discuss, nor do I refer to, the medieval Iberian Jewish community in terms of nation. Rather, I use the concept of “imagined community” that Anderson first applied to the nation-state but made applicable to other kinds of communities.

- 4 For some recent surveys reconsidering the linguistic situation in al-Andalus see David Wasserstein, “The Language Situation in al-Andalus,” in *Studies on the Muwaṣḥah and the Kharja: Proceedings of the Exeter International Colloquium*, eds Alan Jones and Richard Hitchcock (Oxford: Ithaca Press Reading for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, 1991), 1–15, reprint. in *The Formation of al-Andalus*, part 2, *Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, eds Maribel Fierro and Julio Samsó (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 3–35; Consuelo López Morillas, “Language,” in *The Literature of al-Andalus*, eds María Rosa Menocal et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 33–59; specifically referred to questions of language among the Jews is David Wasserstein’s “Langues et frontières entre juifs et musulmans en al-Andalus,” in *Judíos y musulmanes en al-Andalus y el Magreb: Contactos intelectuales; Seminario celebrado en la Casa de Velázquez, 20–21 de febrero de 1997*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2002), 1–11.
- 5 Abraham S. Halkin (“Judeo-Arabic Literature,” in *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*, 3rd ed., ed. Louis Finkelstein (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1960), 2:1116–48) attributes the fast process of Arabization to the Jewish authors’ desire to reach a broader audience as well as to the unsuitability of Hebrew; Joshua Blau (*The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic: A Study of the Origins of Middle Arabic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 19–22), and Rina Drory (“‘Words Beautifully Put’: Hebrew versus Arabic in Tenth-Century Jewish Literature,” in *Geniza Research after Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic: Papers Read at the Third Congress of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, eds Joshua Blau and Stefan C. Reif (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53–66), present the adoption of Arabic as a substitution of Aramaic, understanding the Arabization process as the substitution of one non-Jewish language for another. More recently, Norman A. Stillman (“Languages Patterns in Islamic and Judaic Societies,” in *Islam and Judaism: 1400 Years of Shared Values*, ed. Steven M. Wasserstrom (Portland, OR: Institute for Judaic Studies in the Pacific North West, ca. 1991), 41–55) has called attention to the socio-linguistic patterns shared by both communities, Arabo-Muslim and Jewish.
- 6 Literature on this topic is too abundant to cite here in full. Several reasons have been offered for the use of Hebrew poetry. Among them are the Jewish authors’ desire for immortality, due to the fact that only what had been written in Hebrew would survive (N. Y. Simhoni, “Rabbi Shelomoh ibn Gabirol” [in Hebrew], *Ha-Tequfah* 10 (1924): 146); the influence of the *Piyuṭ* and the resistance to use quranic models (Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude Toward Hebrew, 234); in the early 1980s Nehemia Allony pioneered an explanation, that applies to cultural contact as a whole, and which several scholars have later subscribed, that understands the writing of poetry in Hebrew within the framework of a polemic resistance to the ideal of the ‘arabiyya, that is to the movement upholding the

supremacy of the Arabs, their life style and culture. The following two articles better express Allony's position: "Hishtaqefut ha-mered ba-'arabiyya' be-sifretenu bi-yeme ha-benayim," in *Studies in the Bible and the Hebrew Language Offered to Meir Wallenstein on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, eds Chaim Rabin et al. (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1979), 80–136; "Tehiyyat ha-miqra' bi-yeme ha-benayim ke-milhamah ba-'arabiyya'," in *The Book of Sivan: A Collection of Studies and Essays in Memory of the Late Jerusalem Publisher Shalom Sivan (1904–79)*, eds A. Even Shoshan et al. (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1979), 177–87. Along the same lines goes C. Rabin, "Hebrew and Arabic in Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, eds Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, in association with the Institute of Jewish Studies, London, 1979), 235–45 and also Norman Roth, "Jewish Reactions to the 'Arabiyyah and the Renaissance of Hebrew in Spain," *JSS* 28, no. 1 (1983): 63–84. The lack of sophistication of the Jewish authors' Arabic has also been adduced as an explanation. See Joshua Blau, *Studies in Middle Arabic and its Judaeo-Arabic Variety* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press/Hebrew University, 1988), 87–8; *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo Arabic*, 22–4. For a counterargument, see Rina Drory, "Literary Contacts and Where to Find Them: On Arabic Literary Models in Medieval Jewish Literature," *Poetics Today* 14, no. 2 (1993): 277–302). According to Drory, poetry would have been written in Hebrew due to a division of functions between languages – Arabic for communication and Hebrew for beauty – (See Drory, "'Words Beautifully Put'").

- 7 On the complex interaction between Arabic and Hebrew, see Stillman, "Language Patterns;" Arie Schippers, "Arabic and the Revival of the Hebrew Language and Culture," in *Joden onder de islam: Een cultuur in historisch perspectief/Jews under Islam: A Culture in Historical Perspective*, ed. Julie-Marthe Cohen (Amsterdam: Joods Historisch Museum; Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1993), 75–93; more recently, Ángel Sáenz-Badillo, "Philologists and Poets in Search of the Hebrew Language," in *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*, ed. Ross Brann (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1997), 49–75.
- 8 For a survey of the medieval attitudes toward Hebrew, see Halkin, "The Medieval Jewish Attitude toward Hebrew;" Irene E. Zwiep, "The Hebrew Linguistic Tradition of the Middle Ages," in "La linguistique de l'hébreu et des langues juives," eds J. Baumgarten and S. Kessler-Mesguich, special issue, *Histoire, Épistémologie, Langage* 18, no. 1 (1996): 41–61. Ross Brann's work is exemplary in proving the role of language in shaping identity. See, for example, "Reflexiones sobre el árabe y la identidad literaria de los judíos de al-Andalus," in Fierro, *Judíos y musulmanes*, 13–28. Brann stresses the active role of language in transferring attitudes and patterns of thought across cultures.
- 9 Much has been written on this dispute and its significance. As a token, see Shelomo Morag, "The Controversy between Menaḥem and Dunash and the Revival of the Hebrew Language" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 56 (Summer 1993): 4–19; in *The Com-punctious Poet: Cultural Ambiguity and Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 27–8, Ross Brann reviews the background and terms of the debate. See also Ángel Sáenz-Badillo and Judit Tar-garona, *Gramáticos hebreos de al-Andalus (Siglos X-XII): Filología y Biblia* (Cordoba: El Almendro, 1988), 23–63, and *Los judíos de Sefarad ante la Biblia: La interpretación de la Biblia en el Medievo* (Cordoba: El Almendro, 1996), 55–76. These last two references include extensive bibliographies.
- 10 Note that medieval Jewish sources retain the term *Babylonia* for the territory that, upon the Islamic conquest, came to be called Iraq.

11 Examples of comparison between languages are, in fact, found in the Talmud (see, for example, BT *Sanhedrin* 26a, and BT *Gittin* 68a) and Karaite lists comparing Arabic and Hebrew terms were written by the late eighth century. In the second half of the ninth century Eli ben Judah ha-Nazir, Sa'adia's teacher, also referred to similarities between languages. In the tenth century Dunash b. Tamīm al-Qayrawānī's exegetical work on the *Sefer Yesirah* ("Book of Creation"), which has not survived, or Judah ibn Quraysh's *Risāla* ("Epistle") are examples of grammatical works comparing both Arabic and Hebrew. Ibn Quraysh, the most fervent advocate of comparison, argued that Aramaic and Arabic words, and even Berber expressions, were mixed with the sacred language. On early comparisons of Hebrew with Aramaic and Arabic, see David Téné, "The Earliest Comparisons of Hebrew with Aramaic and Arabic," in *Progress in Linguistic Historiography: Papers from the International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences; Ottawa, 28–31 August, 1978*, ed. Konrad Koerner (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980), 355–77 and Wout J. van Bekkum, "'The Risāla' of Yehuda Ibn Quraysh and its Place in Hebrew Linguistics," *Historiographia Linguistica* 8, nos 2–3 (1981): 307–27. For a recent in-depth reassessment of comparison, see Aharon Maman, *Comparative Semitic Philology in the Middle Ages: From Sa'adiah Gaon to Ibn Barūn (10th–12th C.)*, trans. David Lyons (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

12 Notice that Menahem does not argue in favor of the divine origin of the Hebrew language, but only points out that God gave man the capacity to speak. Among eleventh- and twelfth- Andalusi Jewish authors, only Judah Halevi seems to have supported a divine origin for Hebrew. Most other Jewish and Muslim authors favored the view of the natural or conventional origin of language. On the subject of the origin of language among medieval Muslim grammarians, see Miguel Asín Palacios, "El origen del lenguaje y problemas conexos, en Algazel, Ibn Sīda e Ibn Hazm," *Al-Andalus* 4, no. 2 (1939): 253–81; L. Kopf, "Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology," *SI* 5 (1956): 33–59; Henry Loucel, "L'origine du langage d'après les grammairiens arabes," *Arabica* 10, no. 2 (1963): 188–208; 10, no. 3 (1963): 253–81; 11, no. 1 (1964): 57–72; 11, no. 2 (1964): 151–87; Bernard G. Weiss, "Medieval Muslim Discussions of the Origin of Languages," *ZDMG* 124, no. 1 (1974): 33–41. On related matters in the medieval Jewish tradition, see Sáenz-Badillos, "Philologists and Poets," 56–62; "El contacto intelectual de musulmanes y judíos: Gramática y exegesis," in Fierro, *Judíos y musulmanes*, 32–3; and especially "The Origin of the Language and Linguistic Pluralism according to Medieval Jewish Exegetes," in "Verbum et Calamus: Semitic and Related Studies in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Tapani Harviaainen," ed. Hannu Juusola *et al.*, special issue, *Studia Orientalia* 99 (2004): 293–303.

13 Menahem ben Saruq's *Maḥberet*, was first edited by Tzvi Filipowski (London, n.p., 1854). Page references, however, are to the more recent, critical edition: *Menahem ben Saruq: Maḥberet*, ed. Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Granada: Universidad de Granada/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1986), 1*.

14 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13.

15 See 57 and 142, note 26.

16 Although Dunash does not characterize Menahem as a sectarian, much has been speculated on Menahem's Karaite tendencies. See, for example, Nehemia Allony, "Vistas caraítas en el Mahbereth de Menahem" [in Hebrew], *Tesoro de los judíos sefardíes* 5 (1962): 21–54. Unless new evidence comes to light, no definite conclusion may be reached on this matter.

17 Ben Labraṭ's *Teshuvot* were first edited by Tzvi Filipowski (London: n.p., 1855). Hereinafter references are to the more recent, critical edition: *Těšubot de Dunaš ben*

Labrat, ed. and trans. Ángel Sáenz-Badillo (Granada: Universidad de Granada/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1980), *17.

18 *Patah* and *qameṣ* are two Hebrew vowels indicating “ah” sound.

19 Ibid., 4*, verses 5 and 25.

20 Ibid., *88.

21 *Tēšubot de los discípulos de Mēnahem contra Dunaš ben Labrat*, ed. and trans. Santiago Benavente Robles; rev. Ángel Sáenz-Badillo (Granada: Universidad de Granada/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1986), 2*, verses 27–8 (listed as Talmide Menaḥem in the bibliography).

22 Ibid., *2, verses 13 and 38.

23 Ibid., 9*, verse 77.

24 See above, note 18.

25 Ibid, 4*, verses 44–5. Language as a living organism, language as a plant and language as a building/sacred space, are different degrees of specificity within the umbrella of “language as a nation” metaphor. Examples of this metaphor, although not dominant, were already used by Menaḥem and Dunash. See Ben Labrat, *Teshuvot*, 17* (“you have uprooted the roots and have given roots to the branches [of the Hebrew language]”); 9*, verse 75 (“[Menaḥem] puts down verbal forms (*binyanim*) [that are] like castles”), playing with the double meaning of the terms *binyan* (building/verbal form) and *shoresh* (root both in a tree and in a word). Similarly, the eleventh-century grammarian Judah Hayyūj (ca. 940–ca. 1000), warns against the danger of language misuse because as a result, “the buildings of language would be destroyed, its walls would fall, and its boundaries would be demolished.” See Judah Ḥayyūj, *Two Treatises on Verbs Containing Feeble and Double Letters* by R. Jehuda Ḥayug of Fez; Translated into Hebrew from the Original Arabic by R. Moses Ḥikatilia of Cordova, to Which is Added The treatise on Punctuation by the Same Author, Translated by Aben Ezra, ed. from Bodleian mss., with an English trans. by John W. Nutt (London: Asher, 1870), 3–4.

26 *Tēšubot de los discípulos de Mēnahem*, 5*, verses 5 and 10.

27 Ibid., 15*.

28 On the adaptation of Arabic metrics into Hebrew, see 34–6.

29 Previous complaints on the state of decay of Hebrew are found in Sa‘adia and Karaite authors of biblical commentaries. This theological explanation of the loss of status of Hebrew is also found among contemporary Muslim authors. The Muslim polymath Ibn Ḥazm, for instance, brings attention to the fact that languages and nations share a common destiny. Therefore, as soon as a nation loses its independence, its culture, its heroic deeds and its language inevitably fall into oblivion (see Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām* (Cairo: Maktaba ‘Ārif, 1978), 1:34–40, and Asín Palacios, “El origen del lenguaje,” 264). Likewise, Samaw’al al-Maghribī, who converted from Judaism to Islam in the twelfth century, asserts the following: “When the political independence of a nation is coming to an end through foreign domination and occupation of its land, the true record of its past is obliterated and the vestiges of its antiquity are blotted out and difficult to trace.... This [Jewish] community is the one that has been exposed more than any other to the aforementioned [evils], because it is one of the oldest of nations on record and because it has been ruled by a multitude of nations.” (Samaw’al al-Maghribī, *Iḥkām al-yahūd* [“Silencing the Jews”], ed. and trans. Moshe Perlmann, special issue, *PAAJR* 32 (1964), 54 ed.; 56 trans.).

30 Yehudi ben Sheshet, *Tēšubot de Yēhudi ben Šešet*, ed. and trans. M. Encarnación Varela Moreno (Granada: Universidad de Granada/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1981), 14*. Genesis (36:1 and 36:8) identifies Edom with Esau – the one who sold his primogeniture for lentils. Both Edom and Esau became types for

Rome and, by extension, for Christianity in the Rabbinic and medieval periods. See Gerson D. Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought,” in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19–48; Mireille Hadas-Lebel, “Jacob et Esaï ou Israel et Rome dans le Talmud et le Midrash,” *Revue de l’histoire des religions* 201 (1984): 369–92.

31 Ben Sheshet, *Teshubot*, 9*, verse 84; 15*.

32 Ibid., 13*. The term *lo’ez* has different meanings, according to the context, most of the time referring, as is the case here, to Latin or Romance.

33 Ibid., 5*.

34 See Chapter 3, 57 and 142, note 26.

35 Ibid., 13*.

36 These refer to: “the descendants of Hagar, the dark [descendants] of Qedar and the sons of the Egyptians, who hated the Hebrews” (11*, verse 143) and, similarly, to “Arav and the princes of Qedar” (13*). Qedar was one of Ishmael’s sons (Genesis 25:13, 1 Chronicles 1:29), hence it was usually identified with the Arabs and/or Muslims in medieval Jewish sources. On the paronomastic use of the term Qedar, see below, 128, note 50. On the use of biblical names to characterize Muslims and Christians in medieval Jewish sources, see 56.

37 There is evidence that interaction between Jews and Christians remained a concern in Christian legislation after the Islamic conquest of the Peninsula. See Kenneth Baxter Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Medieval Spain,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Garland, 1996), 89.

38 Both domains, though, are inextricably bonded, as the language under discussion and examination is biblical Hebrew. This is not the only example of awareness of Christian exegesis in philological works written by Jewish authors in al-Andalus. In the eleventh century, both Jonah ibn Janāḥ in his *Kitāb al-Luma’*^c (*Sefer ha-Riqmah*), and Judah ibn Bil’am in his commentary on Isaiah referred to Christian interpretation, for example, when commenting on the term Dumah (Isaiah 29:11). For a recent assessment of the interpretation of Dumah among medieval Jewish exegesis, see Eliezer Schlossberg, “Who is the Subject of the ‘Burden of Dumah’ Prophecy (Isaiah 21:11–22)? A Study in Medieval Commentary” [in Hebrew], *Studies in Bible and Exegesis* 4 (1997): 237–47.

39 Ben Sheshet points out that Christian exegetes used to interpret this Psalm as referring to the hardships Israel was enduring in exile, while Jewish exegetes thought the Psalm referred to the times of David.

40 Ben Sheshet, *Teshubot*, 22*–23*.

41 See Ana Fernández Félix, *Cuestiones legales del Islam temprano: La ‘Utbiyya y el proceso de formación de la sociedad islámica andalusí* (Madrid: CSIC, 2003), 436ff. The only legal case included in this early Andalusi legal compilation regarding the ritual impurity of the Jews is concerned with amulets. See *ibid.*, 442–3. For a general assessment on ritual purity (*tahāra*) or impurity (*najāsa*) in Islam, see *EI*, 2nd edn, s.v. “Tahāra;” *EQ*, s.v. “Ritual Purity.”

42 Ben Sheshet, *Teshubot*, 14*.

43 On this matter, see 34–5.

44 Pronunciation of the duplicated Hebrew palatal glide /yod/ as the Arabic voiced alveolar affricate /jim/.

45 *Opuscules et Traité d’Abou ʻl-Walīd Merwān ibn Djanāḥ de Cordoue*, ed. and trans. Joseph Derenbourg and Hartwig Derenbourg (Paris: Imprimérie Nationale, 1880), 135 and 140–1. Ibn Janāḥ’s anticipation of negative reactions to his use of Arabic as a source of comparison for Hebrew is also found in his introduction to

Kitāb al-Luma' (*Sefer ha-riqmah*), but as his remarks in this work relate also to the study of grammar, I will save this discussion for Chapter 2.

46 See Judah ibn Bil'am *ad* Isaiah 59:13, quoted by Pinchas Wechter in his article "Ibn Barūn's Contribution to Comparative Hebrew Philology," *JAOS* 61 (1941): 173.

47 Quoted by Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 9.

48 His contemporary Ibn Ḥazm echoes this tradition where he writes: "Due to their stubbornness and their weak minds, they [the Jews] believe that the angels that count the believers' deeds do not know Arabic jurisprudence, and do not master any language other than the Hebrew language, and do not write on [the dead] all the lies they have said that are not in Hebrew" (Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-radd 'alā Ibn al-Naghrlīla al-yahūdī wa-rasā'il ukhrā*, ed. Ihṣān 'Abbās (Cairo: Dar al-'urūba, 1960), 64–5). See also Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Ḥazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 134–5. This belief, as indicated by Adang in note 109, is connected to a Jewish tradition found in BT *Soṭah* 33a. See also BT *Shabbat* 12b. In the first pages of his article "Angels Do Not Understand Aramaic: On the Literary Use of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic in Late Antiquity," *JJS* 47, no. 1 (1996): 33–44 (esp. 33–4), Joseph Yahalom explains this Talmudic statement as a reaction toward earlier opinions in the Mishnah according to which prayer could be recited in any language (*Soṭah* 7:1) and as an attempt to disqualify the simple prayers of the common people, in Aramaic, versus the prayers of the scholars, in Hebrew. This opinion would have elicited opposing opinions.

49 Ibn Gabirol's insistence on how language was transmitted may have a polemical component, as one of the major aspects of confrontation between Islam and Judaism was the reliability in the transmission of sacred texts among the Jews.

50 *Secular Poems*, ed. H[ayyim] Brody and J. [Hayyim] Schirmann (Jerusalem: Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 1974), 169–72, 'anaq, verses 7–8. References to Ibn Gabirol's secular poems are to Brody and Schirmann's edition unless otherwise indicated. Medieval Jewish authors, as explained above (126, note 30), identified Edom with Christians. Qedar (see above, 127, note 36) was said to dwell in black tents (Song of Songs 1:5) and was described, alongside Meshekhh, as barbaric in Psalms 120:5. Medieval Jewish authors played with the name Qedar and the root q-d-r, dark, especially in contexts invoking the dark, obscure character of the Arabic language.

51 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 169–72, 'anaq, verses 53–4. On the metaphor that identifies Israel with a mistress and Islam/the Arabs with her maid-servant, see Chapter 3 below. Judah al-Ḥarizi would eventually use the same biblical quotation to refer to himself as translator of al-Ḥarīrī's *maqāmāt*. See *Sefer Tahkemoni*, ed. I. Toporowsky, intro. Israel Zemorah (Tel Aviv: Mahbarot le-sifrut/Mossad Harav Kook, 1952), 15; *The Book of Tahkemoni: Jewish Tales from Medieval Spain*, trans. David S. Segal (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 18.

52 These are typical strategies in poetry of praise where the poet confesses the inadequacy of language to convey the magnificence of his addressee. In doing so, he simply stresses his good command of language.

53 On the role of poet as prophet, see Dan Pagis, "The Poet as Prophet in Medieval Hebrew Literature," in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition*, ed. James L. Kugel (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 140–50.

54 See Ángel Sáenz-Badillo, "El 'Anaq, poema lingüístico de Šelomoh Ibn Gabirol," *MEAH* 29, no. 2 (1980), 5–29.

55 Complaints on the abandonment of Hebrew have precedents in Sa'adia's works as

well as those of his Karaite contemporaries. See Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude Toward Hebrew,” 236, note 14.

56 On works on *Ars Poetica* in al-Andalus, see Amidu Sanni, “Arabic Literary History and Theory in Muslim Spain,” *IS* 34, no. 1 (1995): 91–102; Wolhart Heinrichs, “Literary Theory: The Problem of Its Efficiency,” in *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development; Third Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference*, ed. Gustave E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1973), 19–69.

57 See Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry,” in “Medieval Poetics,” ed. Paul Maurice Clogan, special issue, *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* n.s., 7 (1976): 105–15, and “Moses ibn Ezra,” in Menocal et al., *The Literature of al-Andalus*, 252–64; Brann, *The Compunctionist Poet*, 59–83; Drory, “Literary Contacts and Where to Find Them.” A former interpretation of Ibn ‘Ezra’s *Kitāb*, still defended by some scholars, is the one pioneered by Allony, who read the book as a product of the conflict ‘arabiyya/shu‘ubiyya. See above, 123, note 6.

58 Ibn Bārūn, following the lead of Ibn Quraysh, undertook a systematic comparison of Hebrew and Arabic in his *Kitāb al-muwāzana bayna al-lugha al-ibrāniyya wa-l-‘arabiyya* (“Book of Comparison between the Hebrew and Arabic Languages”). See Pinchas Wechter, *Ibn Barūn’s Arabic Works on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography* (Philadelphia, PA: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1964), 392–402.

59 *Kitāb al-muḥādara wa-l-mudhākara*, ed. and trans. Montserrat Abumalham Mas (Madrid: CSIC, 1985–86), 26v. Hereinafter references to the *Kitāb* refer to folia, identical in edition and translation.

60 Ibid., 25v–26v.

61 Kopf (“Religious Influences,” 47) observes that early philologists did not consider the quranic usage the most authoritative. Philologists, in fact, relied more on Qays, Tamīm and Asad. The dialect of Quraysh, though, gained predominance alongside the dogma of the Qur’ān’s inimitability.

62 Ibn ‘Ezra’ Moses, *Kitāb*, 20v–21v.

63 See Nehemia Allony, “The Reaction of Moses ibn ‘Ezra to the ‘Arabiyya (‘Arabism’)” [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 42, nos 1–2 (1972–73): 97–112, reprint. in Allony, *Studies in Medieval Philology and Literature: Collected Papers*, vol. 4, *Hebrew Medieval Poetry*, prepared for publication by Yosef Tobi (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass), 55–70; rev. English version in *Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies* 3 (1975): 19–40. Similar positions are held by Roth, “Jewish Reactions to the ‘Arabiyyah,” 76–9 and Jan D. Katzew, “Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi: Their Philosophies in Response to Exile,” *HUCA* 55 (1984): 179–95.

64 See Joseph Sadan, “Identity and Inimitability: Contexts of Inter-Religious Polemics and Solidarity in Medieval Spain, in the Light of Two Passages by Moše ibn ‘Ezra and Ya‘qov ben El‘azar,” *IOS* 14 (1994): 343.

65 See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam: A Collection of Articles* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 84.

66 Proofs of a similar attempt to disassociate Andalusi/Sephardic culture from Islam are also found in the *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, where Ibn Daud asserts the Andalusi Jews had arrived to the Peninsula by the times of Titus. This attempt to get a distance from the Arabs of the Peninsula might be countering an association between Jews and Muslims among Christians. For some examples of that equation, see Allan H. Cutler and Helen E. Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 98, 368–9.

67 See Chapter 2, on opposition to literary forms perceived as foreign to Judaism.

68 The bibliography on Halevi is, of course, immense. For a recent reassessment of it,

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which includes a review of the different trends followed in scholarship on Halevi, see Ross Brann, “Judah Halevi,” in Menocal *et al.*, *The Literature of al-Andalus*, 265–81.

69 Judah Halevi, *The Book of Refutation and Proof on the Despised Faith (The Book of the Khazars) Known as The Kuzari*, ed. David H. Baneth, prepared for publication by Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Magnes Press/The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1977); trans. Hartwig Hirschfeld (London: George Routledge and Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1905), Part 1, § 49 (hereinafter *Kuzari*).

70 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 2, § 72.

71 On the quarrel between the belief in a Qur’ān as the word of God revealed to Muhammad in Arabic and the belief in Muhammad’s mission to mankind, see A. L. Tibawi, “Is the Quran Translatable?” *MW* 52, no. 1 (1962): 4–16. From Tibawi’s analysis, it is clear that for all Islamic religious schools, other than that of Ḥanafī, translations of the Qur’ān were ruled out. Halevi’s Andalusi predecessors or contemporaries with influence in his work, such as the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ or al-Ghazzalī, would have held this opinion. Muslim scholars would make incumbent upon non-Arabic speakers at least to learn to recite it. Halevi’s argument had already been used by Qirqisānī. See Haggai Ben-Shammai, “The Attitude of Some Early Karaites Towards Islam,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2:34 and Moshe Zucker, “Berurim be-toledot ha-wikkuḥim ha-datiyyim she-ben hayahut we-ha-islam,” in *Festschrift Armand Kaminka zum siebzigsten geburtstage*, ed. Verlag des Wiener Maimonides-Instituts (Vienna, 1937), 32.

72 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 1, § 101.

73 Ibid., Part 1, § 5.

74 See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 16–17.

75 Francisco J. Hernández (“Language and Cultural Identity: The Mozarabs of Toledo,” *Boletín Burriel* 1 (1989): 30–48) remarks that until 1300 Mozarab legal documents are signed in Arabic. After 1300 signatures are found both in Arabic and in Romance. By the mid-fourteenth-century Latin-Romance signatures are dominant. See also Hanna Kassis, “Arabic-Speaking Christians in al-Andalus in an Age of Turmoil (Fifth/Eleventh Century until A.H. 478/A.D. 1085),” *Al-Qantara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 401–22.

76 The survival of Arabic in Christian territory has been given considerable scholarly attention. In addition to Hernández’s article, see Jean Pierre Molénat, “L’arabe à Tolède, du XII^e au XVI^e siècle,” *Al-Qantara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 473–96. Broader in their scope, but also interesting are Pieter Sj van Koningsveld, “Andalusian Arabic Manuscripts from Christian Spain: A Comparative Intercultural Approach,” *IOS* 12 (1992): 75–110; “Christian Arabic Literature from Medieval Spain: An Attempt at Periodization,” in *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the ‘Abbāsid Period, 750–1258*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 203–24; Luis García Ballester, “The Circulation and Use of Manuscripts in Arabic in 16th-Century Spain,” *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 3, no. 2 (1979): 183–99.

77 On the survival of Arabic among Jews in the thirteenth century and later, see Ron Barkai, “Between East and West: A Jewish Doctor from Spain,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10, nos 1–2 (1995): 49–63 and Eleazar Gutwirth, “Asher ben Yehiel e Israel Israeli: Actitudes hispano-judías hacia el árabe,” in *Creencias y culturas*, eds Carlos Carrete Parrondo and Alisa Meyuhas Ginio (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1998), 97–111.

78 Along these lines, see Isadore Twersky’s remarks in “Aspects of the Social and

Cultural History of Provençal Jewry," *Journal of World History* 11, nos 1–2 (1968): 185–207; reprint. in Isadore Twersky, *Studies in Jewish Law and Philosophy* (New York: Ktav, 1982), 182–202.

79 On Maimonides' use of and attitudes toward language, see Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 324–55, and Norman Roth, "Maimonides on Hebrew Language and Poetry," *Hebrew Studies* 26, no. 1 (1985): 93–101; reprint. in Roth, *Maimonides: Essays and Texts*, 109–22.

80 See *Letters and Essays of Moses Maimonides*, ed. Isaac Shailat (Jerusalem: Maliyot Press of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe Maaleh Adumim, 1987), 1:409. On Maimonides' understanding of the concepts of content and form, regarding Arabic and Hebrew, see 47.

81 *Dalālat al-ḥā’irīn (Sefer Moreh Nevukhim)*, ed. Shelomo Munk (Jerusalem, 1929), Part 3, Chapter 8. Trans. into English Shlomo Pines (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

82 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 2:558.

83 Ibid., 1:223.

84 Samuel ibn Tibbon translated Maimonides' *Dalālat al-ḥā’irīn* from Arabic into Hebrew (*Moreh Nevukhim*). See *ibid.*, 2:531.

85 An identical mechanism is used by the twelfth-century Jewish convert to Islam Samaw’al al-Maghribī in his *Iṣhām al-yahūd*, when he observes the stuttering of Jews versus the eloquence of Arabs. See Samaw’al al-Maghribī, *Iṣhām al-yahūd*, 17a ed., 61 trans.

86 On the meaning of these two expressions, see Joshua Blau, "'At Our Place in al-Andalus', 'At Our Place in the Maghreb,'" in *Perspectives on Maimonides: Philosophical and Historical Studies*, ed. Joel L. Kraemer (Oxford: The Littman Library for Oxford University Press, 1991), 293–4.

87 In his letter to Yemen he contrasts terms in Arabic with their equivalents in "the foreign language," that is, Romance. See Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 1:87.

88 Little scholarly attention has been given to the study of these prefaces, most of which remain in manuscript form. Worth noticing are Jean-Pierre Rothschild's studies: "Motivations et méthodes des traductions en hébreu du milieu du XII^e à la fin du XV^e siècles," in *Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque international du CNRS organisé à Paris, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes les 26–28 mai 1986*, textes réunis par Geneviève Contamine (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1989), 279–30 and "Pour évaluer la place des traductions dans la littérature hébraïque du Moyen Âge occidental," in *We-zo’t le-Angelo: Raccolta di studi giudaici in memoria di Angelo Vivian*, ed. Associazione Italiana per lo studio del Giudaismo (Bologna, 1993), 435–60.

89 Hayyūj, *Two Treatises on Verbs*, 1.

90 The first part of the book was translated in 1160 by Judah ibn Tibbon, at the request of Meshullam b. Jacob of Lunel. See Bahya ibn Paqudah, *Sefer ḥovot ha-levavot ‘im targumo shel Yehudah ibn Tibbon*, ed. and trans. A. Zifroni (Tel Aviv: Maḥbarot le-sifrut, 1959), 2.

91 Ibid., 3.

92 Ibid., 4.

93 Jonah ibn Janāḥ, *Sefer ha-riqmah le-R. Yonah ibn Janāḥ ba-targumo ha-‘ivrit shel R. Yehudah ibn Tibbon*, ed. Michael Wilensky (Jerusalem: Ha-aqademyah la-lashon ha-‘ivrit, 1929–31). 2nd rev. edn David Téné and Zev Ben-Hayyim (Jerusalem: Ha-qqademyah la-lashon ha-‘ivrit, 1964), 1:2–3.

94 Ibid, 1:3.

95 Al-Harizi, *Tahkemoni*, 9 ed.; 11 trans. Hereinafter, I quote Segal's rhyming prose

translation. Segal retains the aesthetic values of the original Hebrew by finding English equivalents to the literary devices employed by al-Harizi.

96 Ibid., 10 ed.; 13 trans.

97 Ibid., 9 ed.; 11–12 trans.

98 See Sadan, “Identity and Inimitability.” See also 100, below.

99 Al-Harizi, *Tahkemoni*, 12 ed.; 14 trans. Emphasis mine.

100 Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 49–50, 114–15.

101 Al-Harizi, *Tahkemoni*, 3 ed.; 3 trans. The literal translation of lines 11–12 in this introductory poem would be: “He whose land was in the Garden of God, went in exile from his dwelling and was driven away. // He abandoned his land and his dwelling/to run trembling to the land of God.” In David Segal’s translation: “He who lived in a Garden of Eden/Fate has marked for a wandering Cain. // He abandoned his land and his dwelling/to run trembling to Zion’s domain.” Segal’s translation is justified as not only the wandering of the Jews was considered proof of their typological identity with Cain, but “trembling” also was, according to some Christian medieval exegetes, the sign of Cain. See Gilbert Dahan, “L’émonie de l’histoire de Caïn et Abel du XII^e au XIV^e siècle en Occident: Notes et textes,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 49 (1982): 21–89; 50 (1983): 5–68.

102 Al-Harizi, *Tahkemoni*, 182 ed.; 176 trans. An equally positive attitude toward Arabic poetry can be found in Chapter 18 from his *Tahkemoni*.

103 See Joseph Sadan, “Judah Alharizi as a Cultural Junction: An Arabic Biography of a Jewish Writer as Perceived by an Orientalist” [in Hebrew], *Pe’anim* 68 (Summer 1996): 16–67; rev. and enlarged version “Un intellectuel juif au confluent de deux cultures: Yehūda al-Harīzī et sa biographie arabe,” in Fierro, *Judíos y musulmanes*, 105–51.

104 See Scheindlin, “Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry,” 112.

105 Joseph Sadan (“Identity and Inimitability”) understands this group of “sages of the Ishmaelites” as an antithetical type or rhetorical device to serve as a contrast to Ben El’azar’s opinions. Sadan connects this passage in Ben El’azar with the *i’jāz al-qur’ān* dogma, although Ben El’azar does not mention this dogma in his work. He also connects it with the arguments used it in the debate on the dogma of the Qur’ān’s inimitability that took place in Murcia shortly after 1263. See Fernando de la Granja, “Una polémica religiosa en Murcia en tiempos de Alfonso el Sabio,” *Al-Andalus* 31 (1966): 47–72.

106 Jacob ben Eleazar, *The Love Stories of Jacob ben Eleazar (1170–1233?)*, ed. Yonah David (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing/Tel Aviv University, 1992–93), 13.

107 Maimonides, *Mishnah ‘im perush Rabbenu Moshe ben Maimon*, trans. Joseph Kafih (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1964); reprint. A. M. Haberman (Jerusalem: Sifriyat Mekorot, 1969), pages are not numbered.

108 Ibid.

109 Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, *Sefer musere ha-filosofim*, Ms. Vat. Urb. Ebr. 53, ff. 20v–21.

110 Although far beyond the limits of the present study, the role language played in the emergent Kabbalah cannot go without notice. Moshe Idel, in studying Abraham Abulafia’s works, has called attention upon the value and use of language among thirteenth-century Kabbalists (Moshe Idel, “Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism,” in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 42–79). From Idel’s analysis a picture emerges where Hebrew language becomes not just the main instrument in the creation of the world, but also a duplication of everything that exists, a whole universe in itself, which structure conveys the form of reality. All other languages, although implied in the Torah, are

no more than imitations of Hebrew, as the following statement by Abulafia, quoted by Idel, exemplifies: “The entire world was created by means of the letters of the Holy language, and all other languages are in comparison likened to an ape” (See Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics*, 3). Similar symbolic descriptions of the Hebrew language are those of a sculpture made of stone versus a living person, or other languages as handmaids of the Hebrew language. On the Other being an imitation of the Self, see below, 108. According to Rabbi Azriel, who tries to explain why the Talmud clarifies Hebrew words by means of a foreign language, all languages are already implied in the Torah. Early Islamic grammarians faced similar challenges in explaining loan words in the Qur’ān. See Kopf, “Religious Influences,” 40–5.

- 111 This is not to say that the question of who was the audience for these late refutations of Islam has been appropriately answered. For an interesting discussion of this matter, see Camilla Adang, “A Jewish Reply to Ibn Ḥazm: Solomon b. Adret’s Polemic against Islam,” in Fierro, *Judíos y musulmanes*, 179–82. See also Chapter 4 below.
- 112 See David Romano, “Conversión de judíos al Islam: Corona de Aragón, 1280 y 1284,” *Sefarad* 36, no. 2 (1976): 333–7; William C. Stalls, “Jewish Conversion to Islam: The Perspective of a *Quaestio*,” *Revista Española de Teología* 43, no. 2 (1983): 235–51; Mercedes García-Arenal, “Rapports entre groupes dans la péninsule ibérique: La conversion de juifs à l’islam (XII^e–XIII^e siècles),” *REMMM* 63–4, no. 1 (1992): 91–101.
- 113 See Leon J. Kassin, “A Study of a Fourteenth-Century Polemical Treatise *Adversos Judeeos*,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1970), 1 ed.; 105 trans.
- 114 See Esperanza Alfonso, “The Patriarchs’ Behavior in Abraham’s Cycle: A Moral Issue in Sephardic and Provençal Jewish Exegesis,” in *Language of Religion, Language of the People: Medieval Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, eds Ernst Bremer et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006), 139–54.
- 115 See Juan Carlos Lara Olmo, [Edición crítica, traducción y comentario a la obra ‘Sefer ’Ahīṭub we-Šalmon’], PhD diss., Universidad Complutense, 1998. The author of the *Sefer Ahīṭuv we-Šalmon* exhibits either a very poor knowledge of or a lack of interest in Islam.
- 116 See Hernández, “Language and Cultural Identity.”
- 117 Ibn Ḥazm’s remarks on language in his works, or Samaw’al al-Maghribī’s, confirm that language matters were related to religious polemics. On religious polemics between Jews and Muslims in al-Andalus, see above, 122, note 28.
- 118 See Steven M. Wasserstrom, “‘The Sī’is Are the Jews of Our Community’: An Interreligious Comparison within Sunnī Thought,” *IOS* 14 (1994): 297–324.
- 119 See Maribel Fierro, “Religious Dissension in al-Andalus: Ways of Exclusion and Inclusion,” *Al-Qantara* 22, no. 2 (2001): 466–7.
- 120 See García-Arenal, “Historiens de l’Espagne, historiens du Maghreb au 19^e siècle.” Although focused on a very different context, that of nineteenth-century European and Spanish historiography, this study makes a very similar claim, as García-Arenal argues that history is written from centers of power and that the periphery, unable to generate its own explanation, accepts that explanation and identifies itself with the stereotype.

2 TRANSMITTING AND PRODUCING KNOWLEDGE: JEWISH AND MUSLIM INTELLECTUALS

1 Ibn Janāḥ, *Sefer ha-riqmah*, 1:2–3.

2 On the development of Hebrew poetry in the East in the first half of the tenth century,

see for example Ezra Fleischer, “The Culture of the Jews of Spain and their Poetry according to the Findings of the Geniza” [in Hebrew], *Pe’amim* 41 (Autumn 1989): 2–20.

3 Quoted by Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude Toward Hebrew,” 236.

4 *Ibid.*

5 In the 850s, forty-eight Christians were executed in Cordova on charges of blasphemy. The movement is documented in the works of the ninth-century Christian scholar, Eulogius of Cordova, and in Alvarus’s biography of the latter. For a recent appraisal of the martyrs’ movement, see Jessica A. Cope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

6 One has to take into consideration, however, that both Eulogius and Alvarus himself are to be credited with a revival of Latin metrical poetry. Their decision betrays an opposition to the use of Arabic meter and, by the same token, an adoption of categories meaningful for ninth-century Andalusi intellectuals. See Ann Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus, 711–1000* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 56. In his article “En torno a la poesía latina de la Córdoba del siglo IX” (*Iberia Cantat: Estudios sobre poesía hispánica medieval*, eds Juan Casas Rigall and Eva M. Díaz Martínez (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2002), 46), Fernando González Muñoz points to passages in Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ works where they present quantitative Latin poetry in opposition to the recitation of the Qur’ān.

7 The elements of this neglect are closer to *shu’ubī* ideals – that is, to ideals opposing the superiority of Arabs and Arabic culture – that any of those found in Jewish sources.

8 Feliciano Delgado León, *Álvaro de Córdoba y la polémica contra el Islam: El Indiculus Luminosus* (Córdoba: Publicaciones obra social y cultural Cajasur, 1996), 182–5 (listed as Albarus Paulus Cordubensis in the bibliography). There is extensive literature on the polemical background surrounding Alvarus’ assertions, as well as on the knowledge of, and interest in, Arabic culture displayed in early Christian sources. See, for example, Dominique Millet-Gérard, *Chrétiens Mozarabes et culture Islamique dans l’Espagne des VIII^e-IX^e siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984); Marie Thérèse Urvoy, “La culture et la littérature arabe des Chrétiens d’al-Andalus,” *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 92, no. 4 (1991): 259–75; Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

9 For an analysis of Hasdai’s letter, see 61–2, and 89–91.

10 Many, if not most, of the verses referring to the benefactor’s command of both Arabic and Hebrew have been collected and analyzed by Ross Brann in his study “Reflexiones sobre el árabe.”

11 Dunash ben Labrat, *Shirim*, ed. Nehemia Allony (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1947), 93, *we-gan ‘ednakh*, verse 1.

12 *Ibid.*, 88–92, *le-rav lo'*, verse 5.

13 *Ibid.*, 66–71, *de’eh libbi*, verse 30. On Esau as a symbol for Christians, see 126–7, note 30.

14 See Yom Tov Assis, “The Judeo-Arabic Tradition in Christian Spain,” in Frank, *The Jews of Medieval Islam*, 111–24, who reads Sa’adia’s work along these lines. Similarly, in “Muslim Knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Traditions in the Middle Ages,” *MR* 16, nos 1–2 (1991): 74–83, Norman Roth sees the renaissance of Hebrew language in Spain as a reaction to the inferiority complex of poets and linguists with regards to Arabic.

15 See, for example, *Avoth de-Rabbi Nathan Solomon Schechter Edition with Refer-*

ences to Parallels in the Two Versions and the Addenda in the Schechter Edition, prolegomenon by Menahem Kister (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), version A, Chapter 2, 17 and 56; version B, Chapter 27, 56–67. See also Shemuel Safrai, *Bi-yeme ha-bayit u-vi-yeme ha-mishnah: Mehqarim be-toledot Yisra'el* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1994), 2:521–3; Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69–70.

16 See Manuela Marín, “La transmisión del saber en al-Andalus a través del *Muŷam* de al-Šadafi,” *Cuadernos del CEMYR* 5 (1997): 51–72.

17 On the more general concept of innovation in Islam, see Bernard Lewis, “Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam,” *SI* 1 (1953): 43–64; Maribel Fierro, “The Treatises against Innovations (*kutub al-bida'*)”, *Der Islam* 69, no. 2 (1992): 204–46.

18 See James T. Monroe, *The Shu'ubiyya in al-Andalus: The Risālah of Ibn García and Five Refutations* (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1970), 27.

19 See Kopf, “Religious Influences.”

20 Samuel ibn Nagrīlah, *Šemu'el ha-Nagid: Poemas*, eds Ángel Sáenz-Badillos and Judit Targarona (Cordoba: El Almendro, 1988–98), 2: poem 52, *ahuv nafshi*, verses 7–11. There is a former edition of the Nagid’s poems by Jarden. As numbers of poems are identical in both editions, hereinafter references are given to poem numbers instead of pages.

21 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poem 18, *shemu'el qadmah*, verses 22ff.

22 Literally, in the meter of *bene 'Efer we-'Efah*. 'Epher and 'Ephah are descendants of Abraham and Qeturah, according to Genesis 25:4. Similar descriptions are found in Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas* 2: poem 61, *yedidekha be-kha yarbun*, verses 16–17; Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poem 18, *shemu'el qadmah*, verses 22–6.

23 The term “Greek science” would change in meaning over time. Up to the end of the twelfth century the expression denotes Hellenistic philosophy in particular, and scientific training in a more general sense. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the sense became progressively more restricted or had specific applications, such as “astrology.” On this matter, see Ángel Sáenz-Badillos and Judit Targarona Borrás, “La ‘ciencia de los griegos’ en los judíos de la España medieval,” in *Studia in Honorem Ludovici Aegidii Edendi Curam Paraverunt: Homenaje a Luis Gil*, eds Rosa M. Aguilar *et al.* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1994), 701–20. For the thirteenth century, see Bernard Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

24 See Manuela Marín, “A l’extrême de l’Islam médiévale: Élites urbaines et islamisation en Algarve,” *Annales: Histoire Sciences Sociales* 53, no. 2 (1998): 364.

25 See Cristina de la Puente, “La caracterización de Almanzor: Entre la epopeya y la historia,” in Ávila and Marín, *EOBA*, 8:367–401.

26 See Brann, “Reflexiones sobre el árabe.

27 Manuela Marín, “La transmisión del saber en al-Andalus.”

28 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 169–72, *'anaq*, verse 8.

29 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poem 21, *yehosef qah*, verses 1 and 6. 'Efah was the son of Midyan, who in turn was the son of Qeturah, Abraham’s concubine/wife (Genesis 25:4), henceforth a symbol for Arabs and/or Muslims.

30 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 45–8, *tehillat el*, verses 43ff.

31 See 55–7, 59, 78–9.

32 Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Analectes sur l’histoire et la littérature des arabes d’Espagne par al-Makkarī*, eds R[einhart P. A.] Dozy *et al.* (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967), 1:514.

33 See Bezalel Safran, “Bahya ibn Paquda’s Attitude toward the Courtier Class,” in Twersky, *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, 1:154–96.

34 Ibn ‘Ezra’, *Kitāb*, 35v. On attempts of disassociation regarding Arabs and Muslims in the Peninsula, see 19–21 and 129, note 66.

35 This translation, if it was ever preserved in writing, has not come down to us. David J. Wasserstein, based on an indirect quotation from *Avot* found in the condemn by atheism of a Muslim from Cordova, in the time of al-Hakam II (961–76), argues for the possible existence of at least an abridgement of it, which included the contents of the Talmud. See “The Library of al-Ḥakam II al-Mustansir and the Culture of Islamic Spain,” *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–91): 99–105. If this translation existed, either in its entirety, or plausibly as an abridgement, it was the first known translation of the Talmud. Translations of religious texts, however, seem to be more connected to polemical purposes and are usually undertaken by converts, which is not the case here.

36 Abraham ibn Daud, *Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-qabbalah)*, ed. Gerson D. Cohen (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 60 ed.; 81 trans.

37 On astrology see the discussion below.

38 On the use of these and similar anecdotes see Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 16–21.

39 See Antoine Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1958), 159. Among the four main Islamic schools, Hanbalites also forbade the sale of Islamic legal texts to *dhimmīs*. Abū Ḥanīfa, in turn, requested that the Qur’ān be sold in a bag, to avoid any contact with non-Muslims, but in al-Andalus Ibn Ḥazm opposed that decision. See Camilla Adang, “Ibn Ḥazm’s Criticism of some ‘Judaizing’ Tendencies among the Mālikites,” in Nettler, *Studies in Muslim–Jewish Relations*, 2:1–15.

40 On access to and knowledge of the Qur’ān among Jews, see Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “Jewish Knowledge of the Qur’ān” [in Hebrew], *Sefunot* n.s., 5 (1991): 37–47.

41 See Eliyahu Ashktor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, trans. Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein, intro. David J. Wasserstein (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992), 2:49–50 and 162.

42 Direct quotations from the Qur’ān are found in the work of tenth-century Eastern scholars, such as al-Qirqisānī and Judah ibn Quraysh. They are not documented, however, among Sephardic authors. Maimonides and Nethana’el al-Fayyūmī, writing outside al-Andalus, also refer to the Qur’ān, if less directly. See Joshua Blau, “Between Judaeo-Arabic and the Qur’ān” [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 40, no. 4 (1971): 512–14. Petrus Alfonsi, born Moshe Sefardi, who converted from Judaism into Islam in 1106 dedicates the fifth chapter of his *Dialogi adversos Judaeos* to Islam and quotes profusely the Qur’ān. Guy Monnot (“Les citations coraniques dans le Dialogue de Pierre Alfonse,” in *Islam et chrétiens du Midi (XII^e–XIV^e siècles)* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1983), 261–77) argues that Petrus Alfonsi’s precise knowledge of the Qur’ān derives, either directly or indirectly, from an earlier Eastern Christian polemical text. See 100.

43 Attempts to hide the origin of the quotations are also attested. This is the case with Abraham ibn Ḥasdai’s (twelfth–thirteenth-century) quotation of the first *sūra*, which he attributes to “a certain sage.” Qur’ān was easily “translatable.” Thus, in his translation of al-Ghazzālī’s ethical work *Mizān al-‘amal* (“Criterion of Action”), Ibn Ḥasdai systematically substitutes quranic with biblical quotations. Joseph Sadan (“Un intellectuel juif,” 113) provides an interesting example along these lines, that of al-Ḥarizi’s translation of the Meccan *maqāma*, by al-Ḥarīrī. The original account takes place in Arabia and deals with the pilgrimage to Mecca. In al-Ḥarizi’s translation the events take place in a location within the Holy Land linked to the pilgrimage to the

Jerusalem Temple in Antiquity. For a detailed discussion of the rendering of quranic quotations in Hebrew translations of Arabic texts, see Jonathan Dechter, “The Rendering of Qur’anic Quotations in Hebrew Translation of Islamic Texts,” *JQR* 96, no. 3 (2006): 336–58.

44 Ibn ‘Ezra’, *Kitāb*, 119v–120. See Ross Brann’s analysis of this passage in *The Compunctionist Poet*, 79–80.

45 Maribel Fierro, “La religión,” in *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal*, ed. José María Jover Zamora, vol. 8, no. 1, *Los reinos de Taifas: Al-Andalus en el siglo XI*, coordinado por María Jesús Viguera (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1994), 473.

46 Ibid., vol. 8, no. 2:469.

47 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 2, § 64.

48 Ibid., Part 2, § 65.

49 Ibid., Part 2, § 66.

50 Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Documents arabes inédits sur la vie sociale et économique en Occident musulman au Moyen Âge*, première série, *Trois traités hispaniques de hisba (Texte arabe)* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1955), 57; trans. into French in *Séville musulmane au début du XII^e siècle: Le traité d’Ibn ‘Abdun sur la vie urbaine et les corps de métiers* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), 128.

51 See 108.

52 Judah Halevi, *Dīwān des Abu-l-Hasān Jehuda ha-Levi*, ed. H[ayyim] Brody (Berlin: Mekize Nirdamim, 1894–1930); repub. A. M. Habermann (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1971), 2:164–6, *devarekha be-mor*, verse 27. References are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

53 Maimonides, *Dalālat al-hā’irīn*, Part 1, Chapter 71 and Part 2, Chapter 11.

54 Ibid., Part 2, Chapter 11. In Part 1, Chapter 71, Maimonides adds a prohibition against divulging the knowledge provided by many sciences to the reason adduced here, namely the dispersion among Gentiles. See also *Mishneh Torah*, eds S. T. Rubinstein *et al.* (Jerusalem, 1967–73), *qiddush ha-hodesh*, 18, 24, where he justifies the reading of works of astronomy on the basis of the loss of books of science written by Jewish authors.

55 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 2:502.

56 On the attitude of medieval Jewish authors toward astrology, see Ron Barkai, “L’astrologie juive médiévale: Aspects théoriques et pratiques,” *Le Moyen Âge* 93, nos 3–4 (1987): 323–48.

57 On this work, see 99–101.

58 Abraham bar Hiyya², *Sefer Megillat ha-Megalle[h] von Abraham bar Chija*, ed. Adolf [Zeev] Poznanski, intro. Julius Guttmann (Berlin: Mekize Nirdamim, 1924), 4ff.

59 Ibid., 110–11.

60 Bahya ibn Paqudah, *Al-Hidāja ʻilā farāʼid al-qulūb des Bachja ibn Jōsēf ibn Paqūda aus andalusien*, ed. A. S. Yahuda (Leiden: Brill, 1912), 237. Hereinafter quoted as *Kitāb al-hidāya*. I follow Menahem Mansoor’s translation: *The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart, from the Original Arabic Version of Bahya ben Joseph ibn Paquda’s al-Hidāya ilā Farāʼid al-Qulūb* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 283. Ibn Paqudah’s attack on astrology is missing in all Hebrew editions.

61 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 2:474–90. For a recent edition, English translation and study of the epistle that the scholars of Montpellier sent to Maimonides, see Shlomo Sela, “Queries on Astrology Sent from Southern France to Maimonides: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text, Translation, and Commentary,” *Aleph* 4 (2004): 89–190. In his article Sela demonstrates that this epistle incorporates quotations and paraphrases of passages from astrological treatises by Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’.

62 On classification of the sciences in classical Islam, see Franz Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, trans. Emile and Jenny Marmorstein (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 52–73, originally published as *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* (Zürich: Artemis, 1965).

63 See Ignaz Goldziher, “The Attitude of Orthodox Islam toward the ‘Ancient Sciences’,” in *Studies on Islam*, ed. Merlin L. Swartz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 185–215. Goldziher observes that the Islamic exegete al-Mursī (d. 655) tried to prove that the Qur’ān referred to the sciences of the Ancients; George Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 51ff.

64 See Maribel Fierro, *La heterodoxia en al-Andalus durante el periodo Omeya* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1987), 161.

65 In Saliba’s opinion (*A History of Arabic Astronomy*, 55), reaction first appeared when the Islamic legal schools were formalized. He further claims that astronomy underwent a process of Islamization that brought it closer to the Islamic sciences. On the status of astrologers, always at the limits of orthodoxy, see Miquel Forcada Nogués, “Investigating the Sources of Prosopography: The Case of the Astrologers of ‘Abd al-Rahmān II,” in “Arab-Islamic Medieval Culture,” ed. and coord. Manuela Marín, special issue, *Medieval Prosopography: History and Collective Biography* 23 (2002), 73–100.

66 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 4, § 23. On Halevi’s broader rejection of Arabic cultural and social identity as formulated in al-Andalus, see Brann’s appraisal in *The Compunction Poet*, 84ff.

67 Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Rasā’il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusi*, ed. Ihsān ‘Abbās (Cairo: Maktaba Khānjī, 1954), 65–7.

68 On the attitude of Maimonides toward poetry, see Hayyim Schirmann, “Ha-Rambam we-ha-shirah ha-‘ivrit,” *Moznayim* n.s., 3 (1935): 433–6; Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, “Maimónides y la poesía,” in Peláez del Rosal, *Sobre la vida y obra de Maimónides*, 483–95; James T. Monroe, “Maimonides on the Mozarabic Lyric: A Note on the *Muwaṣṣaha*,” *La Corónica* 17, no. 2 (1988): 18–32. Maimonides condemns the use of *piyyutim* in the services and shows little regard for their authors, but he willingly accepts hymns and poems of praise.

69 Maimonides, *Dalālāt al-ḥā’irīn*, Part 1, Chapter 2.

70 See Ibn Paqudah, *Kitāb al-hidāya*, 32–3.

71 On Maimonides’ attitude toward the Hebrew language, see 23–4.

72 Maimonides, *Dalālāt al-ḥā’irīn*, Part 3, Chapter 8.

73 See Maimonides, *Mishnah ‘im perush Rabbenu Moshe Ben Maimon*, 3–4:140–1. Emphasis mine.

74 See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd rev. edn (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 43ff.

75 Ibn ‘Ezra’, *Kitāb*, 35. Likewise, Ibn ‘Ezra’ complains about the neglect of history among Jews since the exile began. See *ibid.*, 27–27v.

76 *Ibid.*

77 See Salo W. Baron, “The Historical Outlook of Maimonides,” *PAAJR* 6 (1935): 5–113.

78 Samaw’al al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-yahūd*, 100–1 ed.; 78 trans.

79 *Ibid.*

80 On conversion to Islam for intellectual reasons, see Sarah Stroumsa, “On Jewish Intellectual Converts to Islam in the Early Middle Ages” [in Hebrew], *Pe’amim* 42 (Winter 1990): 61–75. There is an English version of this article in Frank, *The Jews of Medieval Islam*, 179–97.

81 See Rosenthal, *History*, 67. See also Bernard Lewis, “The Use by Muslim Historians of Non-Muslim Sources,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. Bernard Lewis and Peter M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 180ff.

82 From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, Hebrew sources display two trends, one in favor of poetry and one against it. Discussion of these two trends is beyond the scope of the present discussion. On accusations of poetry as transmitter of falsehood, see Brann, *The Compunction Poet*, 33ff.; Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*, 33ff.; Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 64–82; Ángel Sáenz-Badillo, “Notas sobre Meshullam de Piera,” in *Homenaje a Josep Ribera*, forthcoming.

83 Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*, 33–4, quoting the thirteenth-century Provençal jurist Abraham b. Nathan ha-Yarḥi, in his commentary on the minor tractate *Kallah Rabbati*.

84 See 26–7.

85 For an excellent analysis of gender as an instrument to generate social exclusions, and help societies imagine their boundaries, see David Nirenberg, “Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain,” *AHR* 107, no. 4 (2002): 1065–93.

86 *Kitve Rabbenu Mosheh ben Nahmān*, ed. Hayyim Dov Shevel [Charles B. Chavel] (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976), 1:339; trans. in *Ramban (Nachmanides): Writings and Discourses*, trans. Charles B. Chavel (New York: Shilo, 1978), 2:375.

87 As quoted in Yizhak F. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman, intro. Benjamin R. Gampel (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992), 1:106. Emphasis mine.

88 Ed. in Benzion Halper, *Post-Biblical Hebrew Literature: An Anthology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), 1:139; trans. in *Letters of Jews through the Ages: From Biblical Times to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Franz Kobler, 1st pbk edn (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), 1:256–8.

89 Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2:236.

90 On this strategy to create exclusions see conclusion to Chapter 1.

3 LIVING IN THE PRESENT: THE CONCEPTS OF EXILE AND DOMICILE

1 See Norbert Elias, *Time: An Essay*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), originally published as *Über die Zeit* (n.p.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987).

2 Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 1982, reprint with a foreword by Harold Bloom, preface and postscript (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1989).

3 For an overview of the concept of time in Judaism, see Eliezer Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time: Philosophical Dimensions of the Jewish Holy Days*, trans. Amnon Hadary (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000). Representation of time in the Middle Ages continues to be a controversial issue. Some have challenged the radical distinction Yerushalmi establishes between collective memory, as a pre-modern phenomenon, and the writing of history, as a sign of modern times. Amos Funkenstein, for example, has argued that both terms are not antagonistic. Moreover, Funkenstein argues for the existence of a third category – historical consciousness – which, in his view, mediates between memory and history. See David N. Myers, “Remembering Zakhor: A Super-Commentary,” *History and Memory* 4, no. 2 (1992): 129–46 and Funkenstein’s response: “Response [to David N. Myers’ ‘Remembering Zakhor: A Super-Commentary’],” *History and Memory* 4, no. 2 (1992): 147–8. In “Representation of Events in the Middle Ages” (*History and Theory* 27, no. 4 (1988), 40–55) Robert Chazan challenges the idea that all new events and circumstances were understood in paradigmatic terms. He does so by adducing evidence of change in the representation of such phenomena within medieval sources.

4 Yosef H. Yerushalmi, “Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History,” in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391–1648*, ed. Benjamin R. Gampel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3–22. Yerushalmi’s article is not unique in exploring relationships between exile and domicile. See, for example, “Identification of the Spanish Jewry with Eretz Israel,” where Ron Barkai examines Iberian Christians’, Jews’, and Muslims’ identification with their place of birth. Along the same comparative lines, Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin also stress the sense of belonging among Jews as well as among other extended groups or nations in “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (1993): 693–725. Also from a comparative standpoint, although focusing on the literary representation of exile, is Ross Brann’s “Constructions of Exile in Hispano-Hebrew and Hispano-Arabic Elegies” [in Hebrew], in *Israel Levin Jubilee Volume: Studies in Hebrew Literature*, eds Reuven Tsur and Tova Rosen (Tel Aviv: The Katz Research Institute for Hebrew Literature/Tel Aviv University, 1994), 1:45–61.

5 On essentialist views on exile in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish scholarship, see, for example, Gabriel Piterberg, “Domestic Orientalism: The Representation of ‘Oriental’ Jews in Zionist/Israeli Historiography,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2 (1996): 125–45.

6 For a general evaluation of the term *galut* and its historical development, see *EJ*, s.v. “Galut.”

7 Along these lines, Mark R. Cohen (“Sociability and the Concept of *Galut* in Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Middle Ages,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction; Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, eds Benjamin H. Harry et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000, 37–51)) calls attention to the use of the term *galut* as “exclusion from the majority culture and society” in medieval times.

8 See Albert Arazi, “‘Al-ḥanīn ilā al-awṭān’: Entre la ḡāhiliyya et l’Islam; Le Bédouin et le citadin reconciliés,” *ZDMG* 143, no. 2 (1993): 287–327. For al-Andalus, see Fatima Tahtah, *Al-Ghurba wa-l-ḥanīn fi l-shīr al-andalusi* (Rabat: Université Muhammad V, 1993) and Ashraf Ali Hassan Dadour, “El tema del exilio en la poesía hispano-árabe tras la caída del califato” (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense, 1993) (listed as Dadour in the bibliography). The *kutub al-ghurabā* (“books of strangers”), which consist of compilations of poetic graffiti and inscriptions of homesickness, are a subcategory within this genre. See *The Book of Strangers: Medieval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia Attributed to Abu ʻl-Faraj al-Isfahānī*, trans. Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publisher, 2000).

9 Both experiences are known as *al-ghurba al-makāniyya* (“exile from a place”) and *al-ghurba al-zamāniyya* (“exile caused by time”). See Dadour, “El tema del exilio,” 30–42 for poetry written in the East; 84–116 and 120–50 for Andalusi poetry.

10 On this use of exile among medieval Jewish poets, see Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1991), 42.

11 See Moshe Hallamish, “L’attitude du *Kaf ha-Qetoret* envers le Christianisme et l’Islam,” in *1492: L’expulsion des juifs d’Espagne*, ed. Roland Goetschel (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1995), 213–20. Also in the same volume (221–30) is Corinna Coulmas’ article “Exil et redémption dans le ‘Sefer Guerouchin’ ou ‘Livre des Bannissements’ de Rabbi Moché Cordovero.” Both articles deal with sixteenth-century kabbalistic works.

12 This spiritual exile (*al-ghurba al-ruḥīyya*) is known in Arabic poetry since the tenth century but it would not be until the thirteenth century that Sufism popularized the idea of disdain for the world. See Dadour, “El tema del exilio,” 43–6, for poetry

written in the East; 156–74 for Andalusi poetry. See also Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44 (1997): 54.

13 See Robert Edwards, “Exile, Self, and Society,” in *Exile in Literature*, ed. María I. Lagos-Pope (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1988): 15–31.

14 Yizhaq F. Baer (*Galut*, trans. Robert Warshow (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), originally published in German (Berlin: Schocken Books, 1936), reprint. in Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988, 27–39) summarizes in a few pages Bar Ḥiyya’s, Halevi’s and Maimonides’ theoretical considerations of exile. Abraham bar Ḥiyya in *Megillat ha-Megalleh*, understands exile as predestination. According to Halevi, Israel suffers for the sins of the nations. For both Halevi and Maimonides, *galut* has a positive aspect, as it allows for the dissemination of the true religion among Christians and Jews. For later historical development of the concept of exile and its causes, see Shalom Rosenberg, “Exile and Redemption in Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Contending Conceptions,” in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard D. Cooperman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983): 399–430.

15 On liturgical poetry, its evolution and forms, see Leopold Zunz, *Die Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1855–59); Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* [in Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975); José María Millás Vallicrosa, *La poesía sagrada hebraico-española*, 2nd edn (Madrid: CSIC, 1948). On the theme of exile in liturgical poetry, see Raymond P. Scheindlin’s introduction to *The Gazelle* (3–29) and Israel Levin, *Tanim we-kinor: Ḥurban, galut, naqam u-ge’ullah ba-shirah ha-‘ivrit ha-le’umit* (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz ha-me’uhad, 1998). Norman Roth (“‘Sacred’ and ‘Secular’ in the Poetry of Ibn Gabirol,” *Hebrew Studies* 20–1 (1979–80): 75–9) rightly observes the arbitrariness of the classification “sacred/secular.”

16 To this effect, Yizhak Baer (*Galut*, 25) refers to the *selihot* written during the Crusades in the following terms: “from these poems alone, one can construct the historical picture of the *Galut*.”

17 Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1993): 3–21.

18 “Declare” (*asapper*), instead of “hope” (*asabber*), as suggested in the edition’s footnotes.

19 Edited by Hayyim Brody and K. Albrecht in *The New Hebrew School of Poets of the Spanish-Arabian Epoch: Selected Texts with Introduction, Notes and Dictionary* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1906), 7–8, *yagorti mipne*.

20 In most liturgical poems it is difficult to determine whether these biblical types have an ethnic or a religious connotation. On the use and significance of biblical prototypes and typologies, see Gerson Cohen’s remarks in his study of Abraham ibn Daud’s *Sefer ha-qabbalah* (263–303). Cohen (281) notes that biblical typologies had been used by Sa’adia and early Eastern philologists, yet Andalusí Jews were the first to use them systematically. See also Brann, *The Compunctionous Poet*, 46–50; 53–5; Yerushalmi, “Exile and Expulsion,” 14. Leopold Zunz (*Die Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*, 445–8) offers a detailed list of biblical eponyms as they appear in liturgical poetry. On Edom/Esau and Qedar, see 126–7, notes 30 and 36.

21 Ben Labraṭ, *Shirim*, 59–60, *edom ‘aqqr*, verse 1. For a full analysis of this poem, see 86–7.

22 Ibid., 57–9, *deror yiqrā'*, verse 5.

23 See for example, *ibid.*, 56–7, *deleh shovav*, where all biblical types ('Alwan, Manahat, and Shefo, grandsons of Se'ir in Genesis 36:23, Nahat, grandson of Esau

in Genesis 36:17, and Pinon, Esau's general in Genesis 36:41) point to Christianity, while Islam is absent. This emphasis has not gone unnoticed. See, for example, Norman Roth, "Polemics in Hebrew Religious Poetry of Mediaeval Spain," *JSS* 34, no. 1 (1989): 153–77. Roth draws attention to this fact, which he attributes to the presence of the Crusaders in Palestine. Alternatively, the ongoing state of warfare between al-Andalus and the Northern Christian kingdoms, as well as the influence of earlier *piyyutim*, may also be adduced as plausible explanations.

24 On the symbolic uses of Esau, see Cohen, "Esau as Symbol." On Ishmael, see I. Ephal, "'Ishmael' and 'Arab(s)': A Transformation of Ethnological Terms," *JNES* 35, no. 4 (1976): 225–35.

25 Solomon ibn Gabirol, *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol*, 2nd edn, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem, 1977–79), 2:494–5, *sheviyyah 'aniyyah*.

26 See Uri Rubin, "Apes, Pigs, and the Islamic Identity," *IOS* 17 (1997): 89–105 and Michael Cook, "Ibn Qutayba and the Monkeys," *SI* 89 (1999): 41–74.

27 For similar examples, based on the same paradigm, see Ibn Gabirol, *Liturgical Poetry*, 2:471, *shesh nigzeru*; 1:168, *attah amon qaniti*; 2:512–13, *shelah minzar*; 2:538–40, *shavat mesosi*.

28 On Sarah and Hagar in medieval exegesis, see Alfonso, "The Patriarchs' Behavior in Abraham's Cycle" and John L. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–99.

29 See above, the introduction to the book, 6 and 122, note 25.

30 See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1966), 44–55, quoted in J. David Sapir and J. Christopher Crocker, *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 34–5.

31 Burke, *ibid.*

32 Edwards, "Exile, Self, and Society."

33 According to Pagis, editor of Ibn al-Tabbān's *dīwān*, this expression alludes to enemies in general, and to Muslims in particular, as in Genesis 10:10 both terms are associated with Babylonia, which often denotes Islam. This second identification is confirmed by poem 33, where Akkad and Erekh are mentioned side by side with Edom. In poem *ba-ṣar li*, verse 16, the pair Mishma^c and Massa^d, also points to a single identification with Islam, as both are Ishmael's sons (Genesis 25:14). See Levi ibn al-Tabbān, *The Poems of Levi ibn al-Tabbān*, ed. Dan Pagis (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1967), 95–7 and 157–8.

34 In his edition Pagis suggests several identifications for "the servant's son." First, following Genesis 27:37, he relates the expression to Esau, therefore, to Christians. Alternatively, and following Genesis 36:12 and 16, Pagis points to 'Amaleq, one of Esau's descendants, which could imply that Ibn Tabbān is referring to Slaves. Finally, on the basis of Genesis 27:37, reference to a generic enemy should not be ruled out.

35 Lit. "And I have to cry before him *Abrek* ('bow the knee?') in Genesis 41:43.

36 Ibn al-Tabbān, *Poems*, 75–7, *hamon Akkad ve-Erekh*.

37 For accusations that Israel has been left without a Redeemer, see 90–1 and 97.

38 Ibn al-Tabbān, *Poems*, 68–72, *mi-kol ḥatto 'tekhem*, verses 14–17.

39 *Ibid.*, verses 22–7.

40 *Ibid.*, verse 65.

41 Many poems refer exclusively to Edom. See *ibid.*, 72–4, *libbi yaḥil*; 81–3, *leḥuṣah be-orekh galut*; 89–90, *le-el ḥai*. In the poem *yisra'el 'am qadosh* (153–6, verse 27),

the expression “the northerner” (Joel 2:20) could also be interpreted as a reference to Christians.

42 See *ibid.*, 6.

43 The cruelty of Edom toward Jerusalem is proverbial. See Lamentations 4:21ff., and Obadiah 1 through 15. Ibn al-Tabbān would be typologically identifying the fall of Jerusalem with the Christian conquest of Saragossa.

44 See 10.

45 Ed. in P. K. Kokovtsov, *Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), 10; trans. in Kobler, *Letters of Jews through the Ages*, 1:98.

46 *Ibid.*, 10–11 ed.; 98–9 trans.

47 This is the way Menahem ben Saruq describes the space of exile in the poem that opens the letter. For an analysis of the poem, see 90–1.

48 Ed. in Kokovtsov, *Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska*, 13; trans. in Kobler, *Letters of Jews through the Ages*, 100.

49 *Ibid.*, 13 ed.; 100–1 trans.

50 *Ibid.*, 14 ed.; 101 trans.

51 See below, 70–1, on Samuel ha-Nagid.

52 Ibn Paqudah, *Kitāb al-hidāya*, 119; trans. in *The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart*, 171. The biblical passages adduced are Leviticus 26:44; Ezra 9:9; Psalms 124:1ff. Almost a duplicate of Ibn Paqudah’s passage is Nahmanides’ assertion in his commentary to Deuteronomy 28:64ff., where he says: “Once we have been exiled to the countries of our enemies, the work of our hands has not been accursed. Neither have our oxen and the breeds of our flock, our vineyards and our olive orchards and that which we have sown in the field [been adversely affected]. Rather in the countries [of our exile] we are like the rest of the peoples who inhabit whatever country, or even better than them, for His mercies are upon us, because our habitations in exile are by [virtue of] the promise He made to us [Leviticus 26:44].” Hebrew text in *Mikra’ot gedolot ‘Haketer’: A Revised and Augmented Scientific Edition of ‘Mikra’ot Gedolot’ Based on the Aleppo Codex and Early Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Menachem Cohen (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1997–); trans. in *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*, trans. Rabbi Dr Charles B. Chavel (New York: Shilo, 1976), 5:326–7.

53 See Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, 2:253.

54 See María J. Viguera, “Historia Política,” in Jover Zamora, *Historia de España*, vol. 8, no. 1, 31–150.

55 Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-radd*, 46.

56 *Ibid.*, 78–9.

57 See Bezalel Safran, “Bahya ibn Paquda’s Attitude.”

58 On Judah ibn Tibbon’s translation, see 131, note 90.

59 Ibn Paqudah, *Kitāb al-hidāya*, 405.

60 Scholars first looked at Ibn Nagrīlah’s war poems as sources of historical information. See, for example, Hayyim Schirmann, “The Wars of Samuel Ha-Nagid” [in Hebrew], *Zion* 1, no. 3 (1936): 261–83; 1, no. 4 (1936): 357–76, and “Le Diwān de Šemū’ēl Hannāgīd considéré comme source pour l’histoire espagnole,” *Hespéris* 35, nos 1–2 (1948): 163–88. Attention has also been paid to their connection with the Arabic literary tradition. See Israel Levin, “The War Poetry of Shmuel Hannagid: Its Relation to Ancient Heroic Poetry” [in Hebrew], *Ha-Sifrut* 1, no. 2 (1968): 343–67; Ángel Sáenz-Badillo, “La poesía bética de Sēmu’el ha-Nagid: Una muestra de convivencia judeo-musulmana,” in *[Actas del] I congreso internacional “Encuentro de las tres culturas”* (3–7 octubre 1982) (Toledo, 1983), 219–35; Arie Schippers, “Arabic and Hebrew Andalusian War Poems: Reflections on the Poetry of Samuel ha-Nagid,” in *Proceedings of the Tenth WCJS (Jerusalem,*

August 16–24, 1989), division C, vol. 1, Jewish Thought and Literature, ed. David Assaf (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1990), 41–8. David S. Segal (“Observations on Three War Poems of Shmuel ha-Nagid: A Study in Internal Poetic Cohesion,” *AJS Review* 4 (1979): 165–203) convincingly argues for a relationship between the structure of Ibn Nagrīlah’s war poems and the Psalms. Finally, Ross Brann has studied the representation of Muslims in the poems. See *Power in the Portrayal*, 130–9.

61 For a detailed analysis of structure in poems 8, *levavi be-qirbi ham*, 22, *zekhor libbi*, and 31, *ha-e’esor nahale ‘enai*, see Segal, “Observations.” For the rest of the poems, see Sáenz-Badillo’s and Targarona’s studies preceding their edition of each poem.

62 Both poems are thorough analyzed in Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 130–9.

63 See, for example, Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poems 2, *eloah ‘oz*, 4, *ha-li ta‘as*, 13, *ahallel asher en lo demut*, 16, *tovot le-el*, 33, *ashalah be-khanfe sheharim*, and 38, *tenumah be-‘en*. The introductory section can also contain other topics, such as a bacchic theme (poem 29), a love scene (poem 30) or a wisdom-related motif (poem 26).

64 See *ibid.*, poems 2, *eloah ‘oz* and 4, *ha-li ta‘as*.

65 See *ibid.*, poem 2, *eloah ‘oz*, verses 22–3. Schippers (“Arabic and Hebrew Andalus War Poems,” 41–8) interprets the use of “we” as a tribal reminiscence and equates it to the “we” used by classical Arabic poets. A similar transition from the individual to the collective voices takes place in the Psalms, where the poet speaks as a representative of his congregation (see Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 42–80). This transition between “I” and “we” systematically takes place when themes and motifs traditionally found in liturgical poetry are incorporated into secular compositions. See below, 67–8, on panegyrics.

66 Poem 2, *eloah ‘oz*, verse 41 (in Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1), refers to ‘Amaleq, Edom and Qeturah’s sons, coded references to Slaves, Christians and Arabs, respectively. Poem 4, *ha-li ta‘as*, verse 14, alludes to Philistines and Ishmaelites, that is, Berbers and Arabs. On the identification of Philistines and Berbers see S. Munk, “Notice sur Joseph ben-Iehouda ou Abou ’Hadjadj Yousouf ben Ya’hya al-Sabti al-Maghrebi, disciple de Mäimonide,” *JA*, Series 3, 14 (1842), 50, no. 1. Poem 38, verse 30, lists Arabs and Hagarites, Philistines, Hittites, Eunuchs, and Christians. The differences between Arabs and Hagarites are not clear. Sáenz-Badillo and Targarona suggest they could refer to different Arab tribes. As for Hittites, a term that both Ibn Nagrīlah and Halevi use, their identification is also obscure. In poem 156 the former refers to Muḥammad ibn Nūḥ from the Taifa of Moron as *prince of the Hittites*. In poem 16, verses 16–17 refer to Philistines, Arabs, Midianites, Amorites and *Niv-dalim*. Identification of these last three groups can only be hypothetical. The recurrent designation of different groups in the opposing army is first to be related to the composite social map of eleventh-century al-Andalus. From a symbolic point of view, these groups form a multiple Other versus a single, uniform Israel.

67 See Patrick J. Geary, “Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages,” *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983): 15–26.

68 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: Poem 4, *ha-li ta‘as*, verses 103 and 105. These descriptions, however, would refer to Christians, perhaps mercenaries, and not to Muslims.

69 Construction of genealogies has to be understood against the backdrop of a society where lineage was at the basis of social prestige and where different ethnic groups emphasized or fabricated myths of origin. See Maya Shatzmiller, “Le mythe d’origine Berbère: Aspects historiographiques et sociaux,” *ROMM* 35 (1983): 149.

70 On the use of Sukkot in poetry, see Judit Targarona, “La fiesta de Sukkot en la poesía de Yosef ibn Abitur,” *MEAH* 32, no. 2 (1983): 27–44.

71 In the medieval Islamic context, the panegyrist is a professional poet, sometimes inscribed in a *dīwān* (“register”), in service to a prince who pays him a salary. A similar relationship between protector and poet also existed among Jewish elites, as viziers or high officials at the Muslim courts such as Hasdai ibn Shaprut, Samuel ibn Nagrīlah, or Yequiti’el ibn Ḥasan all had their own circle of court poets.

72 On Jewish panegyrists in the Iberian Peninsula, see Hayyim [Jefim] Schirmann, “The Function of the Hebrew Poet in Medieval Spain,” *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no. 3 (1954), 235–52.

73 Isaac ibn Khalfun, *Itzhak ibn Khalfūn: Poems*, ed. Aharon Mirski (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1961), 126–30, *nemugoti be darki ha-resha‘a*, verses 1ff. Emphasis mine.

74 On Daniel’s prophecies see Chapter 4.

75 Very similar to this is the poem *arakh galuti* (Ibn Khalfun, *Poems*, 151–4). In many other passages of Ibn Khalfun’s poems, the patron may assume the functions of God. Thus, he says: “I am thirsty for the Prince as the thirsty gazelle longs for God” (*ibid.*, 110–12, *asovev’ ir*, verses 6–7). The patron can also be identified with the Messiah. Addressing Abū Sulaymān David ben Capron he says: “Your friends await you, David, as if you were David’s son, their Messiah,/as if you were their redemption, as if you return them from their captivity … as if your arrival was their salvation” (*ibid.*, 136–7, *yedidekha lekha*, verses 1–2). Finally, the patron can be treated as the most prominent of the Remnant of Israel, appointed by God as a help for his people: “When God saw his integrity, He established him as the redeemer of Israel in her afflictions” (*ibid.*, 137–9, *nesi’ ‘ammi*, verse 9).

76 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 2: poem 57, *devarekha be-tokh libbot*, verses 9, 15–16. Kehat and Merari are descendants of Levi (Genesis 46:11), to whom the Nagid traces his own origin back.

77 One must take into consideration, however, the fact that the terms the Nagid uses to describe the compensation he will give Ibn Khalfun – he will drink pomegranate juice (Song of Songs 8:2), will sleep in ivory beds (Amos 6:4) and on couches adorned with flowers (1 Kings 6:18) – are used by other poets, and in other contexts, to describe the redemption of Israel. On the use of religious motifs in secular poetry, see Yehuda Ratshaby, “Religious Elements in Profane Use in Arab and Spanish-Jewish Poetry” [in Hebrew], *Bar-Ilan* 7–8 (1970): 178–203.

78 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 79–82, *‘aṭeh hod wa-‘adeh*.

79 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 44, *‘aṣmotai hah*, verse 12.

80 Raymond P. Scheindlin, *Wine, Women and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1986), 43–5.

81 Brann, *The Compunctionist Poet*, 24.

82 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poem 7, *she’ē minni*, verses 8ff. Trans. by Peter Cole in *Selected Poems of Shmuel HaNagid*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 49.

83 Reluctance to take part in the government is also found among pious Muslims who did not want to associate themselves with and ultimately fall into the temptations of power. See Manuela Marín, “Inqibād ‘an al-sultān: ‘Ulamā’ and Political Power in al-Andalus,” in *Saber religioso y poder político en el islam: Actas del Simposio Internacional; Granada, 15–18 octubre 1991*, ed. Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Madrid, 1994), 127–39.

84 Descendants of Se’ir, the Horite, are listed in Genesis 36:20–30. According to Genesis 14:6, the Horites occupied the hill country of Se’ir, East of the Arava. The

term Se‘ir designates either this territory (2 Chronicles 33:14) of its inhabitants (Ezekiel 33:8). As “sons of Esau” are said to live in Se‘ir (Deuteronomy 2:4, 5), Se‘ir is identified with Esau/Edom, hence with Christians.

85 Reference is made here to the sons of Abraham, namely Ishmael, son of Hagar, maid-servant of Sarah, and Isaac, Sarah’s son. In medieval poetry the half-brothers represent Muslims and Jews, respectively.

86 Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, *The Collected Liturgical Poetry: Moses ibn Ezra*, ed. Shimeon Bernstein (Tel Aviv: Massadah, 1957), 162, *qara’i mi-ṣarah*.

87 The pairs “Edom and Arav,” “Edom and Ishmael,” or “Qedar and Se‘ir” are also common (see, for example, *ibid.*, 26, *mah na’im*, verse 10; 242–4, *mi tamim*, verse 19; 307–8, *mevasser me-har*, verse 12). Ibn ‘Ezra’ makes only exceptional use of more elaborated biblical types. Among the exceptions, see, for example, *ibid.*, poem 61, *le-ma’an hefarnu*, where Ibn ‘Ezra’ chooses to refer to several of Ishmael’s and Esau’s descendants. The selection of biblical names seems to be dictated by poetic reasons, such as paronomasia.

88 See, for example, Katzew, “Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi,” 187.

89 On Halevi’s relationship with Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ see Ángel Sáenz-Badillo and Judit Targarona, “Yehudah ha-Levi y los Ibn ‘Ezra’ de Granada,” *MEAH* 37–8, no. 2 (1991): 325–43; on their attitudes toward exile, see Katzew, “Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi.” On Halevi’s poetry on exile, see Israel Levin, “La sufriente en la poesía de Yehuda Halevy, en tiempo de la crisis [sic] de la Reconquista” [in Hebrew], *Tesoro de los judíos sefardíes: Estudio sobre la historia de los judíos sefaradires y su cultura* 7 (1964): 49–64.

90 In Deuteronomy 23:4 Ammonites and Moabites, peoples in Israel’s vicinity, are said not to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord. In this poem, both terms, along with the term Hagarenes (descendants of Hagar), seem to designate different subgroups. On the holy beings (*qadosh* and *palmoni*) see Daniel 8:13.

91 The Messiah.

92 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 3:20, *yod’i hefṣuni*.

93 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 2:268, *yervuni ve-kha*, verse 1.

94 I elaborate further on this topic in Chapter 4.

95 Accusations of forgery, corruption or falsehood in the Scripture are typical Islamic polemical arguments against Judaism and the Jewish Scriptures.

96 On these polemical arguments, see Chapter 4.

97 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 4:67, *yonah nesa’tah*, verses 5–8. Reference to Dishan and Dishon – Se‘ir’s sons according to Genesis 36:12 – as well as to images of idols, point to Christians. The poem also includes references to Muslims. On this poem see Israel Levin, “La sufriente en la poesía de Yehuda Halevi,” 51–6.

98 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 4:67, *yonah nesa’tah*, verses 20–5.

99 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 4:232, *me-az me’on ha-ahavah*. See Raymond Scheindlin’s translation in *The Gazelle*, 77–83 and his study in “Ibn Gabirol’s Religious Poetry and Sufi Poetry,” *Sefarad* 54, no. 1 (1994): 125–9.

100 Credit for the identification of Halevi and Abū l-Shīṣ’s poem is to be given to Israel Levin. See his “I Sought the One Whom my Soul Loveth: A Study on the Influence of Erotic Secular Poetry on Hebrew Religious Poetry” [in Hebrew], *Ha-Sifrut* 3, no. 1 (1971): 116–49. In “Ibn Gabirol’s Religious Poetry,” 126–7, Scheindlin demonstrates that Abū l-Shīṣ’s poem was included in the anthology *Mahāsin al-Majālis* (“The Beauties of Mystical Sessions”) by the Andalusi mystic Ibn al-‘Arif (d. 1141), where it illustrates the concept of *mahabba* (“man’s love for God”). He provides further evidence confirming that Halevi knew the poem through Sufi sources.

101 As translated by Scheindlin in *The Gazelle*, 77.

102 It is precisely in the twelfth century that Sufis began to transform the concept of martyrdom (based on Qur'ān 3:169, 47:4–6) into a wholly war against the soul's desires. See David Hartwig [Zvi] Baneth, "Judah Halevi and al-Ghazali," in *Studies in Jewish Thought: An Anthology of German Jewish Scholarship*, ed. Alfred Jospe (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 181–99. On Sufi influences in Hebrew poetry, see Israel Levin, "The Medieval Hebrew Poetry of Ascetism" [in Hebrew], in *On Poetry and Prose*, ed. Zvi Malachi (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press/Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies/B. Katz Institute for Research of Hebrew Literature, 1977), 149–84. On possible Ashkenazi influences, see Gerson D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim (prior to Shabbetai Zvi)," in *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. Max Kreutzberger (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967), 115–56. Finally, Christian influence cannot be ruled out. On the transformation of religious attitudes under Christianity, see Robert Chazan, "The Timebound and Timeless: Medieval Jewish Narration of Events," *History and Memory* 6, no. 1 (1994): 5–34.

103 See above, 141, note 14. Rosenberg ("Exile and Redemption," 424) argues that both Halevi's and Nahmanides' views would lead to a new understanding of exile as sin, as both considered 'aliyah capable of bringing about salvation. In Chapter 2, MISSING, I have observed that, from a cultural standpoint, Moses ibn 'Ezra' and al-Ḥarizi also hold positive views of exile.

104 Abraham ibn 'Ezra', *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra*, ed. Israel Levin (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1975–80), 1:440–3, *yeya etnappel*, verses 4–6.

105 Ibid., verses 14–18.

106 Ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, 49 ed.; 67 trans.

107 See Manuela Marín, "Signos visuales de la identidad andalusí," in *Tejer y vestir: de la Antigüedad al Islam*, ed. Manuela Marín (Madrid: CSIC, 2001), 137–80.

108 In the eleventh century the Muslim theologian and poet Abū Ishāq of Elvira used the same elements against the Jews. In a famous poem against the Jewish community of Granada, he warns Bādīs, Zirid King of Granada: "[The Jews] dress in the finest clothes/while you wear the meanest" (Emilio García Gómez, *Un alfaquí español: Abū Ishāq de Elvira; Texto árabe de su 'Dīwān' según el Ms. Escr. 404, publicado por primera vez, con introducción, análisis, notas e índices* (Madrid: CSIC, 1944), 151–3, verse 29; trans. in Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East*, 2nd edn (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1993), 170). In his collection of *fatwās*, *Mi'yār al-Mughrib*, the North African jurist Al-Wansharīsī (d. 1508) reports that the Jewish physician Ibn Qanbāl (Fez, twelfth–thirteenth centuries) "used to wear a turban and rings, ride horses and be in his tent without the *zunnār* nor the *ghiyār* of *dhimmīs*." (Ahmad ben Yahyā al-Wansharīsī, *Al-Mi'yār al-mu'rib wa-l-jāmi' al-mughrib 'an fatāwī 'ulamā' Ifrīqiya wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, eds Ahmad al-Bū'azzāwī et al. (Fez, n.p., 1896–98), 198–9). See Matthias B. Lehmann, "The Jews of Muslim Spain and the Maghrib: Al-Wansharīsī's Collection of *Fatwās* as a Source for Jewish Social History," in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress; Toledo July 1998*, eds Judit Targarona and Angel Sáenz-Badillos (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1:440–6.

109 Restrictions in dressing or imposition of distinctive signs are particular to Almoravid and Almohad times. See Marín, "Signos visuales" and "La vida cotidiana," in *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal*, ed. José M. Jover Zamora, vol. 8, no. 2, *El retroceso territorial de al-Andalus: Almorávides y almohades, siglos XI al XIII*, coord. María Jesús Viguera (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1997), 385–433.

110 Ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, 48 ed.; 66 trans.

111 Ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, 51 ed.; 69 trans.

112 The confrontation between Ibn Ḥanokh's son and Ibn Shatnash started after Ibn Sharprūt's death in 990. At the time, Ḥishām II (965–1013) ruled al-Andalus, but *de facto* power remained in the hands of Ibn Abī ‘Āmir, his *ḥājib*. Ibn Daud may be referring to either figure.

113 A similar endorsement of a Jewish leader's ruling takes place when Ibn Daud, in describing the independence from the Eastern academies that took place in the tenth century, says that ‘Abd al-Rahmān III “was delighted by the fact that the Jews of his domain no longer had need of the people of Babylonia” (*ibid.*, 48 ed.; 66 trans.).

114 Moses ibn ‘Ezra’, *Secular Poetry*, ed. Hayyim Brody, with additions by Dan Pagis (vol. 1, Berlin, 1935; vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1942; vol. 3, Jerusalem, 1978), 1:18–20, *ha-dami tidreshu*.

115 See Israel Levin, “*Zeman y Tevel en la poesía laica de la Edad Media*” [in Hebrew], *Tesoro de los judíos sefardíes: Estudio sobre la historia de los judíos sefaradires y su cultura* 5 (1962): 68–79; Franz Rosenthal, “*Sweeter than Hope:*” *Complaint and Hope in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 1–58.

116 In this regard, it is worth remarking that he described himself in exile even before he left Granada. See Ángeles Navarro, “Moisé ibn ‘Ezrá: El poema de los dos exilios,” *Sefarad* 61, no. 2 (2001): 381–93. This is consistent with Mark Cohen’s description of exile not, or not only, as separation from a place but as an oppressed state of being and exclusion from one’s surroundings. While Ibn ‘Ezra’ felt in exile both in and outside Granada, Cohen remarks that exile could even be experienced in Palestine. See Cohen, “Sociability and the Concept of *Galut*.”

117 Ibn ‘Ezra’, *Secular Poetry*, 1:66–7, ‘ad an be-galut, verses 25ff.

118 *Ibid.*, verse 30.

119 *Ibid.*, 1:18–20, *ha-dami tidreshu*, verse 23.

120 *Ibid.*, 1:66–7, ‘ad an be-galut, verse 32. Many other medieval cities became Jerusalem in exile. See Yerushalmi, “Exile and Expulsion,” 15–16.

121 Ibn ‘Ezra’, *Secular Poetry*, 1:66–7, ‘ad an be-galut, verses 31ff.

122 *Ibid.*, 1:117–20, *haradah lavshah tevel*, verse 7.

123 *Ibid.*, 1:193–5, *ha-ya ‘mod levavi*, verse 12.

124 On the similarity between Ibn ‘Ezra’s images of Time and Arabic poetry, see Arie Schippers, “Two Andalusian Poets on Exile: Reflections on the Poetry of Ibn ‘Ammār (1031–86) and Moses ibn Ezra (1055–1138),” in *The Challenge of the Middle East: Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam*, eds Ibrahim A. El-Sheikh *et al.* (Amsterdam: Institute for Modern Near Eastern Studies, University of Amsterdam, 1982), 113–21.

125 See García-Arenal, “Rapports entre groupes dans la péninsule ibérique.”

126 Contemporary Arabic sources refer to Almoravids (Sanhāja and Lamṭūna) and Almohads (Maṣmūda) versus Andalusis, who are indicated without ethnic adscription. Among the latter, only Jews and Christians are indicated as distinctive. See Helena de Felipe, “Componentes de la población: Categorías sociales; La familia,” in Jover Zamora, *Historia de España*, vol. 8, no. 2, 344.

127 In the footnotes of his translation Monroe understands “bells” as referring to Christian church bells. Alternatively, and also more likely, the term could refer to the cattle’s bells.

128 See Abū l-Tāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Saraqusṭī, *Al-maqāmāt al-luzūmiyya*, ed. Hasan al-Waragli (Rabat: Manshūrāt ‘Ukkaz, 1995), 385–6. I follow James T. Monroe’s translation in *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmiyah by Abū l-Tāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī al-Saraqusṭī al-Āstarkūwī* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 418–24. Al-Saraqusṭī never left al-Andalus. However, the main character in the “Maqāma barbariyya,” al-Sā’ib ibn Tammām, gets to Tangiers from the East and heads to

al-Andalus. For a study of this *maqāma*, see Monroe, *ibid.*, 46–54 and Ignacio Fernando, “La *Maqāma barbāriyya* de al-Saraqusṭī,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 2 (1991): 119–29.

129 See Brann, “Constructions of Exile;” Gérard Nahon, “La elegía de Abraham Ibn Ezra sobre la persecución de los almohades: Nuevas perspectivas,” in *Abraham ibn Ezra y su tiempo: Actas del simposio internacional; Madrid, Tudela, Toledo, 1–8 febrero 1989*, ed. Fernando Díaz Esteban (Madrid: Asociación Española de Orientalistas, 1990), 217–24; María José Cano, “Sobre el poema histórico de Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ titulado *Ahad Yarad*,” in *Homenaje al Profesor Jacinto Bosch Vilá*, ed. University of Granada (Granada, 1991), 2:679–88.

130 On Halevi’s relationship to Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ and his family, see Ángel Sáenz-Badillo and Judit Targarona, “Yēhudah ha-Levi y los Ibn ‘Ezra’ de Granada.”

131 Lit. princes, chiefs. The verse might refer to the chiefs, or clans, of Edom (Genesis 36:15).

132 Judah Halevi, *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi*, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem, n.p., 1978–85), 3:893–4, *lo’ alekhem*, verses 5–12.

133 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 2:184, *ha-yukhlu fegarim*, verses 13ff.

134 On courtiership in the Iberian Peninsula, see Hayyim H. Ben-Sasson, “The Generation of the Spanish Exiles Considers Its Fate,” *Binah: Studies in Jewish History, Thought and Culture* 1 (1989): 85ff.

135 See Edwards, “Exile, Self, and Society.”

136 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 2:172, *heṣiqatni teshuqati*, verses 5ff.

137 See Muhammad Khalid Masud, “The Obligation to Migrate: The Doctrine of *hijra* in Islamic Law,” in *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination*, eds Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscator (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 29–49.

138 All liturgical poetry written in Hebrew remained unknown outside the Jewish community, which rules out the possibility that by encoding the text the authors intended to conceal it from Muslim or Christian eyes. References to liturgical poetry in polemics are not documented until the thirteenth century. Gilbert Dahan (“La prière juive au regard des chrétiens au Moyen Âge,” *REJ* 154, nos 3–4 (1995): 437–48) gives evidence for how thirteenth-century Christian polemists scrutinized *piyyutim* in a search for attacks on Jesus and Christianity.

139 See Olmo Pintado, “Una teoría para el análisis de la identidad cultural.”

4 WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH: SELF AND OTHER IN THE JOURNEY TOWARD THE END OF TIME

- 1 The term eschatology, from the Greek *eschaton* (“doctrine of the last things,” or “end of history”) does not have an exact equivalent in Hebrew. The closest terms would be *aharit ha-yamim* (“the days to come”) (*Isaiah* 2:2), *qes ha-yamim* (“the end of days”) (*Daniel* 12:13) and *‘et ha-qes* (“time of the end”) (*Daniel* 8:17). See *EJ*, s.v. “Eschatology.”
- 2 Given the centrality of the Messiah in mediating the transition to the end of time, Jewish tradition and scholarship often uses the term “messianism” to refer to eschatology in its broad sense. For general surveys on Jewish messianism, see Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 1–36 and Gerson D. Cohen, *Jewish History and Jewish Destiny*, with a foreword by Neil Gillman (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), 183–212. On the development of Jewish messianic thought in biblical literature, apocrypha, and pseudepigrapha, see the following standard works: Aaron Zeev Aescoli, *Jewish Messianic Movements*:

Sources on Messianism in Jewish History from the Bar-Kokhba Revolt until Recent Times [in Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1956), 1:15–78; Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, trans. W. F. Stinespring (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 26–386. For an up-to-date discussion on this period, see Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 1–42.

- 3 On differences between national eschatology and apocalypticism, see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 6. In describing the historical evolution of apocalyptic tendencies in Judaism, Moshe Idel (“Jewish Apocalypticism, 670–1670,” in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, eds Bernard McGinn *et al.*, vol. 2, *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 1:204–37) points out that apocalypticism never gained a very prominent position in Judaism throughout rabbinic and medieval times. Messianism, on the contrary, became one of its central tenets. For the rabbinic period, see Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel: From the First through the Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 3–35; Aescoli, *Jewish Messianic Movements*, 79–91; Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 388–517; Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah*, 43–60; 81–100.
- 4 In apocalyptic thought, descriptions of Self and Other in the present and in the eschatological future feed each other and are part of one and the same perception of time and history. I consider the two concepts in separate chapters purely for the sake of analytical clarity.
- 5 While the strong messianic orientation of Christianity is beyond dispute, the significance of eschatology in early Islamic times is a controversial issue. For a recent appraisal of the topic see Fred M. Donner, “La question du messianisme dans l’islam primitif,” *REMM* 91–4 (2000): 17–27. While Mahdism was admittedly more prevalent among Shiites, Sunni Muslims rarely disputed this perspective; in fact, it was far from uncommon for Sunnis themselves to exhibit mahdist claims. See *EI*, s.v. “Mahdi.”
- 6 See Yonina Talmon, “Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change,” *Archives européennes de sociologie* 3, no. 1 (1962): 125–48 and “Millenarian Movements,” *Archives européennes de sociologie* 7, no. 2 (1966): 159–200.
- 7 In O’Leary’s words, the object of this approach is to “discover how audiences are moved or persuaded through the interplay of style, form, content and context in texts both spoken and written” (Stephen O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4).
- 8 See Juan Gil, “Judíos y cristianos en Hispania (s. VIII–IX) (Continuación),” *Hispania Sacra* 31, nos 61–4 (1978–79): 9–88.
- 9 Joshua Starr (“Le mouvement messianique au début du VIII^e siècle,” *REJ* 102, nos 1–2 (1937): 88) argues that references to this pseudo-Messiah, named Sereno, may have been interpolated during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.
- 10 On messianic anxiety in the Eastern Mediterranean, see Starr, “Le mouvement messianique;” Cohn, *The Jewish Messiah*, 81–90; Bernard Lewis, “An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History,” *BSOAS* 13 (1949–50): 308–38 and “On That Day: A Jewish Apocalyptic Poem on the Arab Conquests,” in *Mélanges d’Islamologie: Volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis*, ed. Pierre Salmon (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 197–200.
- 11 This calculation was based on the conviction that the world would last six eras, equivalent to the six days of Creation. The beginning of the seventh era would open a one thousand-year period of justice on earth. Among Christians, the tradition of the millennium originates in Revelation 20, where Jesus is said to come back a

second time, destroy evil, establish the Kingdom of God and rule for one thousand years. On the technical aspects of the year 800 as the *terminus ad quem* for the six eras of the world, see Juan Gil, “Los terrores del año 800,” in *Actas del Simposio para el estudio de los códices del ‘Comentario al Apocalipsis’ del Beato de Liébana*, ed. Joyas Bibliográficas (Madrid, 1978), 215–47. On the origins and development of the Jewish millenarian tradition, see Norman Roth, “‘Seis edades durará el mundo’: Temas de la polémica judía española,” *Ciudad de Dios* 199 (1986): 45–65. The term “millennialism,” originally describing this calculation, has extended its meaning to the point of encompassing all movements expecting a final, imminent, and catastrophic End of the World.

12 Eleazar’s conversion is said to have come, in fact, as a result of Jewish messianic activity. See Bernard Blumenkranz, “Du nouveau sur Bodo-Eléazar?” *REJ* n.s., 12 (1953): 35–42 and M. Kayserling, “Eleazar und Alvaro,” *MGWJ* 9 (1860): 241–51. Alvaro’s and Bodo’s argument regarding the advent of the Kingdom of God revolves around the exegesis of two biblical passages – Genesis 49:10, where it is said that “the scepter will not depart from Judah,” and Daniel 9:24–5, a passage referring to the Seventy Weeks [of years,] that is, 490 years, after which Jeremiah predicted the End would come. On messianic activity in the Peninsula during this early period, see also Adeline Rucquoi, “Messianismo y milenarismo en la España Medieval,” *Medievalismo: Boletín de la sociedad española de estudios medievales* 6, no. 6 (1996): 14–17.

13 Maribel Fierro, “Mahdisme et eschatologie en al-Andalus,” in *Mahdisme: Crise et changement dans l’histoire du Maroc; Actes de la table ronde organisée à Marrakech par la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat du 11 au 14 Février 1993*, ed. Abdelmajid Kaddouri (Rabat: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 1994), 47–69.

14 Tenth-century legal records report cases of conversion from Judaism into Islam, but there remains some doubt as to whether these cases are purely theoretical or based on real conversions. Moreover, even if they do represent reality in some fashion, the rate of conversion is still impossible to determine. For a discussion of conversion during the ninth–tenth centuries, see Pedro Chalmeta, “Le passage à l’Islam dans al-Andalus au X^e siècle,” in *Actas del XII Congreso de la UEAI, Málaga 1984*, ed. Union Européenne d’Arabisants et d’Islamisants (Madrid, 1986), 161–83 and David J. Wasserstein, “A *Fatwā* on Conversion in Islamic Spain,” in Nettler, *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*, 1:177–88.

15 Shelomo Dov Goitein, “‘Meeting in Jerusalem’: Messianic Expectations in the Letters of the Cairo Geniza,” *AJS Review* 4 (1979): 43–57.

16 See Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1993), 104 and 112.

17 Ben Labrat, *Shirim*, 59, *edom ‘aqqr*.

18 Sons of Se’ir in Genesis 36:20–1.

19 Lit. “the crop-destroying beast,” one of the four primary causes of injury according to *Baba Kamma* 1:1.

20 Ibn Gabirol, *Liturgical Poems*, 2:446–7, *she’eh ne’esar*.

21 The seventeenth day of Tammuz, a fast day, opens a three-week mourning period that ends with the commemoration of the actual destruction of the Temple on the ninth of Av.

22 Sheshakh is a coded reference to Babylonia [Bavel], based on the technique of *atbash*, where the first letter of the alphabet substitutes the last, the second the penultimate, and so forth. Therefore, b-b-l becomes sh-sh-kh.

23 See Genesis 25:27.

24 The “he-goat” is identified as the king of Greece in Daniel 8:21. The sequence this poem puts forth – Babylonia, Persia, Rome, and Greece – was commonly used, with some variation in order, in rabbinic sources. After the Islamic conquests it became Babylonia, Persia, Rome/Christianity, and Islam. The poem *seson libbi* in Ibn Gabirol’s *dīwān* (2:584–6), for example, reflects this latter sequence. Hence, the poet refers to Nebo (a name listed among the returnees from Babylonia in Ezra 10:43 and Nehemiah 7:33), Paras, Elifaz (Esau’s son in Genesis 36:10) and Nevayot (Ishmael’s elder son in Genesis 25:13). Although the *pizmon* under analysis conveys the first sequence, in verse 1 Ibn Gabirol describes the community as captive in the hands of Babylonia and Se’ir, that is, Christians and Muslims as a dual fourth kingdom. At other times, the biblical terms are more difficult to identify and the selection seems to suit metrical needs. Thus, the poem *shenotai safū* (2:358–9, verses 10–13) runs as follows: “Sheshakh ruled over me/until it cowered, // Se’ir, Yavan and Paras/seized me. // Elam, Meshekhd and Tiraz scattered me, // And still Ishmael/would destroy and crush me/In the year 461 h. (4830/1068).” On the theory of the four kingdoms, see below, 99–102.

25 See, for example, Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 222–36.

26 Ibn Gabirol uses a great variety of terms to refer to the Messiah, such as Yinnon’s horn (*Liturgical Poetry*, 2:443–5, *shimshi ‘ale na*’, verse 16 (Psalms 132:17)), the stock of Jesse (*ibid.*, 2:325, *bi-shelomi en doresh*, verse 4 (Isaiah 11:10)), the one with a ruddy face (*admoni*) (*ibid.*, 2: 457, *shokhev ‘ale mitṭot zahav*, verse 1 (1Samuel 16:12)). He often refers to one or another messianic precursor, most notably Elijah, or Pinhas ben Elazar ben Aharon ha-Cohen, who is identified with Elijah in rabbinic sources (*ibid.*, 2:512–13, *shelah minzar*, verse 2 (Numbers 25:11–12)). According to *Targum Yonathan ad Exodus* 6:18, as Jarden indicates in his edition, this last character is Elijah.

27 See for instance, 66.

28 See 16–17 and 29. These metaphorical projections are also common in contemporary Arabic poetry. See Pagis, “The Poet as Prophet,” and Aharon Komem, “Ben shirah la-nevu’ah: ‘Iyyunim be-shire Yehudah ha-Levi,” *Molad* n.s., 2, nos 11–12 (1969): 676–97.

29 See 61–2.

30 The poem, *afuddat nezer*, is edited in Hayyim Schirmann, *Ha-shirah ha-‘ivrit bi-Sefarad u-ve-Provence* (Jerusalem: Bialik; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1954–60), 1:6–8.

31 Edited in Kokovtsov, *Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska*, 18; trans. in Kobler, *Letters of Jews through the Ages*, 1:105.

32 He says the Jews expected their redemption after 70 years or 430 years, following the duration of the Babylonian and the Egyptian exiles respectively, or after 500 years. Quoted by Gil, “Judíos y cristianos en Hispania,” 24.

33 Abū Muhammad ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Hazm, *Kitāb al-fīṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwā'* *wa-l-nihāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, ca. 1982), 1:229; translated in Miguel Asín Palacios, *Abenázam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1927–32), 2:271–2. For a similar argument see his *Al-radd*, 42.

34 Ibn Nagrīlah, *Poemas*, 1: poem 1, *yom ṣar u-maṣoq*.

35 The debate on the absence or presence of political power among the Jews in exile was part of the polemical exchange allegedly held between Ibn Nagrīlah and Ibn Ḥazm. See 122, note 28. Other similar arguments, based on Genesis 49:10, arise in Jewish-Muslim polemics. See, for example, Samaw’al al-Magribī’s *Iḥām al-yahūd*, 62–3 ed.; 60 trans.

36 See 64–6.

37 See Arie Schippers, “Arabic and Hebrew Andalusian War Poems.”

38 See Nehemia Allony, “Shire Šion be-shirato shel Rabbi Shemu’el ha-Nagid,” *Sinai* 68, nos 5–6 (1971): 210–34; reprint. in Allony, *Studies*, 29–54. Allony takes these three sections as prefiguring Halevi’s poems on Zion.

39 See Abraham S. Halkin, *Zion in Medieval Literature* (New York: Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1961), 77–9.

40 In “Observations” David Segal analyzes poems 8 and 31 from the point of view of their internal cohesion.

41 Yaddayr ibn Ḥubāsa, who competed with Bādīs to succeed king Ḥabūs in Granada, ended up joining forces with Wāṣil and Muwaffaq, Granada’s enemies. Ibn Nagrīlah, at the head of the Granada army, confronted all three in Arjona in 1041.

42 The standard translation of this title in Arabic is “commander of the faithful.” The meaning is legislative, more than military.

43 See Maribel Fierro, “Sobre la adopción del título califal por ‘Abd al-Rahmān III,” *Sharq al-Andalus* 6 (1989): 33–42. Tangential to the discussion at hand, but interesting with regard to the ways in which power was legitimized during the Caliphate period, is Miquel Barceló, “El califa patente: El ceremonial omeya de Córdoba o la escenificación del poder,” in *Estructuras y formas de poder en la historia: Ponencias [Segundas jornadas de estudios históricos]*, eds Reyna Pastor et al. (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1991), 51–71.

44 As Fierro observes, this had been in fact a prominent central title for rulers of the Fāṭimid dynasty in Egypt and part of North Africa. Hence, every indication is that ‘Abd al-Rahmān III’s selection of titles with mahdist connotations might well have been dictated by the desire and the need to counter the claims of the Fāṭimids.

45 He became Emir in the year 912/300 h. and Caliph in 929/316 h.

46 See Ella Landau-Tasseron, “The ‘Cyclical Reform’: A Study of the *Mujaddid* Tradition,” *SI* 70 (1989): 79–117 and Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “‘Tajdīd al-dīn’: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning, Roots, and Influence in Islam,” in “Renewal (*Tajdīd*) and Reform (*Islāh*) in Islam,” ed. Aharon Layish, special issue, *Ha-mizrah he-hadash/The New East* 31, nos 121–4 (1986): 1–10. For an English version of this article, see Brinner and Ricks, *Studies*, 1:99–108.

47 See Fierro, “Sobre la adopción del título califal,” 40–1.

48 Along the lines of this argument, Goitein (“A Report on Messianic Troubles in Baghdad in 1120–21,” *JQR* n.s., 43 (1952–53): 66) remarks that messianic movements, whether Jewish or Islamic, often had religious roots but political aims.

49 See Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation*, 58–80; Aescoli, *Jewish Messianic Movements*, 137–230; Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 62–75; Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah*, 101–6.

50 This specific date is mentioned in Ibn Gabirol’s poem, *shenotai safu*. See above, 152, note 24.

51 See Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press; Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952–85), 5:199.

52 Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Masarra (d. 931) is considered to be one of the first Sufis and philosophers in al-Andalus.

53 See Anonymous, *Al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-marrākushiyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir Zimama (Casablanca: Dār al-rashād al-ḥadītha, 1979), 80–1.

54 The city of Lucena was known in medieval Hebrew and Arabic sources as being inhabited almost exclusively by Jews. The city is reported to have enjoyed a high degree of autonomy from Granada, under whose jurisdiction it belonged, during the Taifa period. Interestingly, at least some Jewish families in Lucena claimed to be of

Davidic descent. See Felipe Maíllo Salgado, “The City of Lucena in Arab Sources,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1993): 149–65.

55 See Jacob Mann, “Ha-tenu’ot ha-meshihiyyot bi-yeme mas’e ha-ṣelav ha-rishonah,” *Ha-Tequfah* 23 (1925): 243–61; 24 (1926): 335–58; Shlomo Dov Goitein, “A Report on Messianic Troubles in Baghdad in 1120–21,” *JQR* n.s., 43 (1952–53): 57–76.

56 Parallels between Ibn Tūmart and Mūsā Darī are striking. Both came from the Southern Maghrib, and studied in al-Andalus. The former studied with Ibn Mighash in Lucena and the latter was a disciple of al-Ghazzālī. See Mercedes García-Arenal, “Messianism juif aux temps des *mahdīs*,” in Fierro, *Judios y musulmanes*, 211–29 and Madeleine Fletcher, “Ibn Tūmart’s Teachers: The Relationship with al-Ghazālī,” *Al-Qantara* 18, no. 2 (1997): 305–30. Although there is no conclusive evidence, it is likely that Ibn Khaldūn is actually referring to Mūsā Darī when he attributes to a Jew from Fez a *mal’aba* (“versified prophecy”) that led to his assassination. See Walter J. Fischer, “Ibn Khaldūn: On the Bible, Judaism and the Jews,” in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, eds Samuel Löwinger *et al.* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1958), 2:147–71.

57 These are two of the four messianic pretenders to which Maimonides refers in his *Iggeret Teman* (see below, 102 and 107–9). He reports a third one in the city of Lyon, which some scholars identify with Lyon, France, and some others with León, Northwestern Spain. Gerson D. Cohen (“Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim,” 115–56) calls attention to the fact that, while sources report the existence of twelve messianic pretenders in the Maghribi/Sephardic area between 1065 and 1492, no news are extant of messianic pretenders in Ashkenaz.

58 In “Faux prophètes et mahdis dans le Maroc médiéval” (*Hespérus-Tamuda* 26–7 (1988–89): 5–23) Halima Ferhat and Hamid Triki argue that up to the twelfth century eschatological activity among Muslims in the Maghrib and al-Andalus was limited to prophetic claims of some sort. Beginning in the twelfth century, the sources attest mahdist claims.

59 See Heinrich Graetz, *A History of the Jews*, ed. and trans. Bella Löwy (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), 4:189.

60 This revision of the minorities’ status in Almohad times is largely due to David Corcos-Abulafia’s work (“The Attitude of the Almohadic Rulers towards the Jews” [in Hebrew], *Zion* 32, nos 3–4 (1967): 137–60). In his view, the brutality of Berber tribes that characterized the early Almohad period targeted Muslims and non-Muslims alike. He also remarked that there was a period of relative calm under ‘Abd al-Mu’min. Jewish traders even took part in commercial exchanges between the North of Africa and Italian and French seaports.

61 During the years 1198–99 Jews in Almohad territory were forced to wear a distinctive sign on their clothes. See Marín, “La vida cotidiana.” Under al-Mansūr, attempts were also made to keep converts out of the international trade networks.

62 This opinion is shared by Jean Pierre Molénat in his article “Sur le rôle des almohades dans la fin du christianisme local au Maghreb et en al-Andalus,” *Al-Qantara* 18, no. 2 (1997): 389–413.

63 Multiple explanations have been given for the survival of the Jewish population in these regions. In “Sur le rôle des almohades,” Molénat claims Jews could survive in Almohad territory because they were not identified with the ideals of the Reconquista. Simon Levy (“Maimonide et l’histoire du Judaïsme marocain,” in *Maimonide: Colloque du 22 décembre 1986 à Casablanca*, ed. Le Conseil des communautés israélites du Maroc (Casablanca, n.d.), 83–108) attributes their survival to the fact that the central tenet in the Almohad doctrine was *tawḥīd* (“the

unity of God”), which conflicted with the trinitarianism of Christians but not with the tenets of Judaism.

64 On the relationship between Halevi’s poems and contemporary historical events, see Levin, “La sufriensa en la poesía de Yehuda Halevy.”

65 Yitran and Hemdan (Genesis 36:20–6) are descendants of Se’ir, hence the allusion is to Christians. The wordplay in the verse (*yitran we-hemdan le-yitran we-hemdan*) is not retained in English.

66 Meshekha, a descendant of Japhet (Genesis 10:2), is difficult to identify. In many other texts it appears to denote Muslims. See 128, note 50 and 152, note 24. On Philistia (Isaiah 14:29) see 144, note 66.

67 Nevayot (Exodus 25:13) is Ishmael’s firstborn, hence it points to Muslims.

68 In his short commentary on the book of Daniel, Ibn ‘Ezra’ identifies the Cushites with one of the ten horns in Daniel’s vision (7:1–28), hence with a subcategory among Muslims. See below, 101.

69 The meaning of the Hebrew term *hamushim* is uncertain. It refers to the Israelites who left Egypt (Exodus 13:18).

70 Ga’tam (Genesis 36:10–11) is a descendant of Esau and therefore refers to Christians.

71 See Halevi, *Dīwān*, 3:179–80, *yone ge’ayot*.

72 This bitter lament for the passing of one thousand years after the destruction of the Temple is common to many other poems. See, for example, *ibid.*, 4:224, *yonati lailah*; 4:222–3, *yonat rehoqim*. As in the example under analysis, these three poems are all *seliḥot* and all three begin by representing the community of Israel as a dove, a common image in Halevi’s poetry.

73 While in this poem Halevi holds a position against calculating the final end, in some other poems he offers his own predictions. See Halevi, *ibid.*, 2:302, *namta we-nirdamta*, a well-known poem in which he says the world will come to an end in 1130. See Scheindlin’s analysis of this poem in *The Gazelle*, 108–13. A similar inconsistency between being reluctant to give a date for the End and actually offering one is observable in Maimonides’ works. See below, 156, note 89.

74 For Halevi, redemption can only be attained by an active communion with God in the Land of Israel. See Baer, *Galut*, 33.

75 Shammah is a grandson of Esau, according to Genesis 36:13.

76 Halevi, *Liturgical Poetry*, 2:387–9, *el simhat gili*, verses 6, 10–14.

77 Poems complaining about the delay in the coming of the End are countless. As way of example, see Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’, *Religious Poems*, poem 19, *avi, avi*; poem 94, *aḥerah ‘et mo’ed*; poem 99, *e gevuratekh*; poem 111, *eharah ‘et peduti*.

78 Israel, according to Leviticus 20:26.

79 In 2 Samuel 21:16 and the subsequent account of David’s struggle with the Philistines, Ishbibenob, David’s opponent, is identified as a descendant of Rafah. On Philistia and the Philistines, see above, 144, note 66.

80 Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’, *Religious Poems*, 1:79–80, *sur, ha-megora’*.

81 For other examples voicing a similar accusation, see *ibid.*, 1:305–7, *amrah ketushah*; 1:337–9, *at seh fezurah* and 2:75–8, *elohe qedem*.

82 In the poem *amrah Siyyon*, an elegy for the ninth of Av, written in a dialogued form, for example, a generic enemy rebukes a personified Zion, adducing that God is not helping Israel, and that he has overcome Israel’s God. As the prophecies have already been fulfilled and the Torah is proven to be flawed, there is no reason to keep faithful to the Jewish faith. See Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’, *The Religious Poems*, 2:255–9, *amrah Siyyon*.

83 See also 2:396–7, *ayyeh nevu’ot*.

84 This position might be reflecting a reaction against the dogma of the Qur’ān’s

inimitability, that is, against the possibility that eloquence might be considered proof of prophecy. On this matter, see 19–24.

85 Pagan, “Poet as Prophet,” 142–3. The literary identification of poet and prophet, and the reception of poetry-prophecy in a dream, are to be related to the ongoing debate on the modes of prophecy and the ideal recipients of prophecy. See below, 102–3.

86 On Solomon ibn Ferruziel, see Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:50–1 and 69.

87 Halevi, *Dīwān*, 2:93–9, *zo’t ha-tela’ah*, verses 60–3.

88 Halevi’s poem *namta we-nirdamta* (see 155, note 73) and Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’s poem *aḥah, yarad ‘al sefarad* (see 78 and 149, note 129) are illustrative in this regard.

89 The authors whose interpretations of Daniel I will review in this section – Bar Ḥiyya’, Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’, Halevi, Ibn Daud, and Maimonides – differed in their positions toward messianic calculations. Bar Ḥiyya’ enthusiastically engages in calculations and, based on exegesis and astrology, provides several dates (1136, 1230, 1448) for the coming of the End, an attitude that Ibn ‘Ezra’, who opposes such calculations, severely criticizes. Halevi echoes hopes for 1130 to be the *terminus ad quem* for redemption in his poetry, but he refrains from calculations in his *Kuzari*. A similarly ambivalent attitude is held by Maimonides. Maimonides rejects messianic calculations based on astrology, which he views as a pagan idolatrous practice, yet in his *Iggeret Teman* he recalls a family tradition based on the prophecy of Balaam (Numbers 23:23) that foresees the restoration of prophecy in 1210. For Halevi’s rejection of calculations in connection with his decision to leave the Peninsula, see Cohen, “Messianic Postures.”

90 Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, 69.

91 See above, 88.

92 See Daniel 2:31–45 and 7:1–14.

93 On the four kingdoms in medieval Jewish literature, see Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 205–19.

94 In Bar Ḥiyya’s opinion, Jeremiah’s prophecy of the seventy weeks, interpreted in Daniel 9:1–27, refers to the destruction of the Second Temple. Reference to the present exile is included in 11:1–45 (11:1–20 covers from the destruction of the Second Temple to the advent of Islam; 11:21–35 covers the Islamic period; and 11:36–45 refers to the present exile and the coming of the End). Bar Ḥiyya’ (97) points out the differences between his interpretation of Daniel 11:1–45 and that of his predecessor, Sa’adia. For the latter, as for Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ (see 101), most of the passage refers to Greece and Rome and not to Ishmael.

95 From the time Constantine converted to Christianity.

96 Bar Ḥiyya’, *Megillat ha-megalleh*, 95–6. Daniel 11:21–2 refers to Seleucus IV, who succeeded Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE). Emphasis mine.

97 The term *meshugga* (“madman”) comes from Hosea 9:7: “The days of punishment have come for your heavy guilt.... The prophet was distraught, the inspired man driven mad.”

98 Bar Ḥiyya’, *Megillat ha-megalleh*, 96.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid. The word *qalon* could also be a coded reference to *Qur’ān*.

101 Ibid., 97.

102 For this early period, see M. C. Díaz y Díaz, “Los textos antimahometanos más antiguos en códices españoles,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 45 (1970): 149–64 and Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam.”

103 Standard works on Mozarabic apologetic and polemics against Islam are Norman

Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960) and Burman, *Religious Polemic*.

104 The name is pseudonymous in all likelihood.

105 The *Risāla* was not translated until 1142 but must have been circulating in Aragon before Bar Ḥiyya's death in 1136. In fact, it is well established that Pedro Alfonso's information on Islam in Chapter 5 of his *Dialogui adversos iudeos*, written in 1110, is largely based on the *Risāla* (see Pieter Sj. van Koningsveld, "La apología de al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII: Huellas toledanas de un 'animal disputax,'" in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la reconquista de Toledo: Actas del II congreso internacional de estudios mozárabes*; Toledo, 20–26 mayo 1985, ed. Instituto de estudios visigótico-mozárabes (Toledo, 1989), 3:107–29). In this article van Koningsveld suggests that Pedro de Toledo, translator of the *Risāla*, is actually Pedro Alfonso. Pedro Alfonso's *Dialogui adversos iudeos* include the *hadīth* on the broken teeth, but not the second tradition of his poisoning and death.

106 Pedro Alfonso is not the only Jewish convert who, once converted, wrote against Islam. Another well-known case is that of the anonymous author of *Tathlīth al-wāḥdānīyah*, supposed by some to be a convert because he quotes the Hebrew Bible and the Targum. See Thomas E. Burman, "Tathlīth al-wāḥdānīyah and the Twelfth-Century Andalusian-Christian Approach to Islam," in Tolan, *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, 109–28.

107 Bar Ḥiyya, *Megillat ha-megalleh*, 96–7.

108 The first, shorter commentary was written in Rome between 1140 and 1145 and has been edited by H. J. Mathews, "Abraham ibn Ezra's Short Commentary on Daniel," in *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, ed. A. Löwy (London: Trübner and Co., 1877; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975). Citations refer to the Greenwood Press edition. The larger version was written in Dreux in 1156 and appears in standard editions of the *Mikra'ot Gedolot*.

109 Based on 1 Chronicles 17, where Kittim is mentioned among Yavan's sons, and Numbers 24:24.

110 See Ibn 'Ezra' on Daniel 2:39, and Mathews, "Abraham ibn Ezra's Short Commentary," 3.

111 See Ibn 'Ezra' on Daniel 7:14 and 12:11.

112 See *ibid.* and Mathews, "Abraham ibn Ezra's Short Commentary," 4.

113 See Mathews, "Abraham ibn Ezra's Short Commentary," 11. On the identification of the Kaaba with Mercury, see Bernard Septimus, "Petrus Alfonsi on the Cult at Mecca," *Speculum* 56, no. 3 (1981): 517–33.

114 In Ibn 'Ezra's view, Ishmael/Islam is only alluded to in the first prophecy of Daniel (7:1–28) and this is the only prophecy referring to the final End. The second and fourth (Daniel 8:1–27; 10:1–12;13) are extended prophecies on Persia and Greece, and the third (Daniel's interpretation of Jeremiah's Seventy Weeks in 9:1–27) does not allude to the four kingdoms.

115 On the *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, see above, 75–6. As Gerson D. Cohen demonstrated in his incisive study on the book, Ibn Daud combines two computation systems: the first is based on the seventy weeks of Daniel, and the second derives from the 500-year figure attested in Islamic tradition. On the basis of both systems, the years in which he published his books, 1159–60, would actually mark the beginning of a new historical period. These calculations notwithstanding, Ibn Daud declares himself opposed to any attempt to usher in the End.

116 In his superb introduction to the *Book of Tradition* Gerson Cohen offers a thorough study of Ibn Daud's use of the "four empires" paradigm.

117 Ibn Daud, *Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-qabbalah)*, 35 ed.; 45 trans.

118 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 87–8; *Iggeret Teman* is also edited in *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen: The Arabic Original and the Three Hebrew Versions*, ed. Abraham S. Halkin, trans. Boaz Cohen (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952). I follow Abraham Halkin's translation in *Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides*, trans. and notes Abraham Halkin, discussions David Hartman (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985), 100–1.

119 The argument often boiled down to whether or not Muhammad had performed miracles. While the Qur'an does not claim Muḥammad possessed supernatural qualities, early Islamic tradition based on quranic passages on the exceptional qualities of the Prophet began to attribute miracles (*mu'jizāt*) to him. Two related genres, *dalīl al-nubuwwa* ("proofs of prophecy") and *shamā'il* ("exposition on the Prophet's qualities") were already established by the ninth century, and both underwent extensive development beginning in the eleventh century. Sara Stroumsa ("The Signs of Prophecy: The Emergence and Early Development of a Theme in Arabic Theological Literature," *HTR* 78, nos 1–2 (1985): 101–14) has suggested that it was, in fact, under the impact of these two Islamic genres that Jewish authors began to become interested in defining what characterizes true prophecy. As for al-Andalus, works on the proofs of prophecy are profusely written in the eleventh century in the context of anti-Christian polemics (see Fierro, "La religion," in Jover Zamora, *Historia de España*, vol. 8, no. 1, 423–5). However, it was precisely in the twelfth century that the subject became widespread in Shi'ite and Sufi circles (see García-Arenal, "Messianism juif"). This defense of the prophecy of Moses vis-à-vis Muhammad lays outside the scope of the present study.

120 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 1, § 7–8.

121 On the Ismaili-Shi'ite substratum in Halevi, see Ignaz Goldziher, "Le Amr ilāhī (ha-'inyā hā-élöhī chez Juda Halévi," *REJ* 50 (1905): 32–44; Shlomo Pines, "Shi'ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *JSAI* 2 (1980): 165–251. On the broader Sufi tendencies that could have influenced Halevi, see García-Arenal, "Messianisme juif."

122 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 5, § 23.

123 Ibn Daud devotes a substantial part of his work to the topic of prophecy. See *The Exalted Faith*, trans. Norbert M. Samuelson and trans. ed. Gershon Weiss (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 188–216 [163a–183a]. He bases his argument on the moral and intellectual perfection of Moses and on his public performance of miracles.

124 On the superiority of Moses' prophecy, see for example Maimonides, *Dalālat al-hā'iřin* (*Sefer Moreh Nevukhim*), Chapter 35, and *Iggeret Teman* (*Letters and Essays*, 97–8). Moshe Zucker ("Berurim be-toledot ha-wikkuḥim ha-datīyyim," 32–3 [Hebrew section]), argues that this tendency not to ascribe miracles to prophets had already begun with Sa'adia and that similar opinions were common in Maimonides' day among Muslim scholars.

125 In his *Iggeret teḥiyyat ha-metim* ("Epistle on the Resurrection of the Dead") and in his legal works, Maimonides does not insist that only the Messiah will perform miracles.

126 This appears to have been the case with Bodo-Eleazar in the ninth century (see above, 85 and 151, note 12). Famous in Halevi's time was the conversion of Obadiah, a Norman nobleman. After converting in 1102, Obadiah left for the East in search of the Jewish Messiah. On conversion to Judaism in this period, see Norman Golb, "Notes on the Conversion of European Christians to Judaism in the Eleventh Century," *JJS* 16, nos 1–2 (1965): 69–74. On Obadiah, see Norman Golb, "The Music of Obadiah the Proselyte and his Conversion," *JJS* 18, nos 1–4 (1967): 43–63.

127 See Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 1, § 27. On proselytism in Halevi, see Lasker, “Proselyte Judaism, Christianity and Islam;” Baruch Frydman-Kohl, “Covenant, Conversion and Chosenness: Maimonides and Halevi on ‘Who Is A Jew?’” *Judaism* 41, no. 1 (1992): 64–79.

128 *Kuzari*, Part 1, § 115.

129 Halevi, *Kuzari*, Part 4, § 10–11. Halevi’s position toward the idolatrous character of Islam is somewhat ambivalent. He emphasizes that Muslims retained the relics of ancient idolatry while changing only the forms, that is, merely pretending to be monotheistic. The content and meaning of Islamic practices remain idolatrous. In spite of this fact, a difference has to be acknowledged in Halevi’s writings between Muslims, who reject images, and Christians. According to Halevi’s account, Muslims originally had been closer to Jews; but the change in the direction of the *qibla* and in ceremonial laws caused them to deviate from the straight path (Part 4, § 13).

130 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 334 (letter to Obadiah).

131 Christianity and Islam represent imperfect or deficient versions of monotheism.

132 See Frydman-Kohl, “Covenant, Conversion and Chosenness;” Novak, “The Treatment of Islam and Muslims in the Legal Writings of Maimonides.”

133 See Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 238ff.

134 See Schlossberg, “The Attitude of Maimonides towards Islam.” On Jewish converts praying in mosques, see below, 103–4.

135 Among well-known converts, some, such as Jacob ibn Killis (930–91) in Egypt and Abū l-Fadl Ḥasdai ibn Ḥasdai (b. 1050?) in Saragossa, were high officials at court and may have converted for political or social reasons. It is likely that the conversion of others, such as Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (ca. 1077–1164), Isaac ibn ‘Ezra’ (twelfth century), and Samaw’al al-Maghribī (ca. 1125–75), was due to their attraction to Arabic culture. Advancement in society and interest in Arabo-Islamic culture by no means exhaust a wide array of motivations. The conversion of Jewish individuals, and their motivations for doing so are discussed in Mercedes García-Arenal, “Jewish Converts to Islam in the Muslim West,” *IOS* 17 (1997): 227–48, and Stroumsa, “On Jewish Intellectual Converts to Islam.”

136 Even when forced, some conversions, such as those of the community leaders, had a powerful impact on the community.

137 Eventual differences that arise between Maimonides’ attitude toward Islam as presented in his letters and the position attested in his other works will be addressed in the footnotes. Maimonides’ description of Islam in these letters had a huge impact on subsequent generations’ understanding of Jewish life under Islam.

138 See Eliezer Schlossberg, “The Attitude of R. Maimon, the Father of Maimonides, to Islam and Muslim Persecutions” [in Hebrew], *Sefunot* n.s., 5 (1991): 95–107.

139 See L. M. Simmons, “The Letter of Consolation of Maimun ben Yosef,” *JQR* o.s., 2 (1890): 19 ed.; 92–3 trans. Interestingly, the Dayyan describes Daniel as “the seal of the prophets,” when customarily Malachi is considered to be the last prophet in Judaism. This perhaps suggests that, in his view, the events Daniel foresaw were about to occur.

140 See Simmons, “The Letter of Consolation,” 1 ed.; 67 trans. As Simmons remarks in his introduction to the edition and translation of the letter (65), the Dayyan’s emphasis on the belief in God, his prophet and Torah, mirrors the emphasis on God, Muhammad and the Qur’ān among Muslims.

141 Prayer is to be in Hebrew preferably, but Arabic is equally permissible (see Simmons, “Letter of Consolation,” 9 ed.; 77 trans.).

142 The Dayyan traces back the origin of both versions, long and short, to the last three biblical prophets, namely, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi. On similar changes introduced into the liturgy as a result of persecution in Palestine and Babylonia, see

Jacob Mann, “Changes in the Divine Service of the Synagogue Due to Religious Persecutions,” *HUCA* 4 (1927): 241–310.

143 See *El*, s.v. “Nūr Muḥammadī,” and Uri Rubin, “Preexistence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muhammad,” *IOS* 5 (1975): 62–119.

144 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 57.

145 It is likely that this letter was written in response to Maimon ha-Dayyan’s *Iggeret ha-neḥamah*, as suggested by Schlossberg (“The Attitude of R. Maimon, the Father of Maimonides, to Islam,” 103–4).

146 It is not only the present persecution that has parallels in the past, but also the reaction to persecution, as demonstrated by Maimonides’ remarks that the sages had a merciful attitude toward converts in Hellenistic times. Likewise, God also had a merciful attitude toward forced converts in the past.

147 This was also Abraham ibn Daud’s attitude in his *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, written at about the same time, in Christian Spain.

148 Maimonides’ leniency toward forced conversion has been given different interpretations, according to the *halakhah*. See, for example, Halkin and Hartmann, *Crisis and Leadership*, 50–82 and Hayim Soloveitchik, “Maimonides’ *Iggeret Ha-Shemad*: Law and Rethoric,” in *Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein Memorial Volume*, ed. Leo Landman, (New York: Ktav, 1980), 281–319.

149 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 1:54; trans. in Halkin and Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership*, 30.

150 In his *Mu‘jib fī talkhīs akhbār al-Maghrib* the thirteenth-century Maghribi chronicler al-‘Abd al-Wāhid Marrākushī reports as follows: “The Jews living among us have accepted Islam; they pray in our mosques and their children read the Qur’ān, they follow our religion and tradition, but only God knows what lies in their hearts, or what is hidden behind their closed doors.” Ya‘qūb al-Manṣūr himself, as al-Marrākushī reports, acknowledged, “Were I sure of you [true conversion] to Islam, I would allow you to mix with Muslims by marriage or otherwise; were I sure of your infidelity, I would kill you, take your children captive and seize your property as plunder for Muslims, but I do have doubts [on both matters].” See Reinhart P. A. Dozy, *The History of the Almohads, preceded by a Sketch of the History of Spain, from the Time of the Conquest till the reign of Yūsuf ibn-Téshūfīn and of the History of the Almoravides by Abdo-‘l-sáhid al-Marrékoshī*, 2nd rev. edn (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1968), 224.

151 Joel L. Kraemer (“On Maimonides’ Messianic Posture,” in Twersky, *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, 2:109–42) has suggested the connection with al-Farābī’s recommendation to migrate to ideal cities.

152 See above, 105.

153 Maimonides, *Letters and Essays*, 1:86; trans. in Halkin and Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership*, 99.

154 Ibid., 1:109 ed.; 126 trans.

155 Ibid. It appears that he reads the term “Qedar” in this Psalm as a reference to Quraysh, Muḥammad’s tribe. See David Qimḥī *ad Psalms* 120:5.

156 Muslim polemicists argued that this verse proved the abrogation of the Torah (that was given at Sinai) by the Qur’ān, as mount Paran is a veiled allusion to Islam. Maimonides argues that during the Exodus, God did not manifest himself suddenly, but rather in stages. Moreover, and on the basis of *Sifre*, he recalls that God first offered his Law to Romans and Arabs and these peoples spurned it.

157 In the view of Muslim polemicists, the Hebrew expression *bi-me’od me’od* would be equivalent to Muḥammad as the sum of their respective numeric values is ninety-two. To disprove this claim, Maimonides observes that, according to Qur’ān 66:6, the name of the Prophet was not Muḥammad, but Ahmād. On this *sūra*, see

W. Montgomery Watt, “His Name is Ahmād,” *MW* 43 (1953): 110–17. To disprove Muslim claims regarding this verse still further, Maimonides adduces Genesis 21:13 and 21:12, two verses confirming Ishmael’s subordination to Isaac.

158 For a chart of biblical passages invoked as testimonies to Muḥammad in Arabic sources, see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 264–6. The topic is discussed in James Robson, “Does the Bible Speak of Mohammed?” *MW* 25 (1935): 17–26; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 74–110; and Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism*, 141–62. The three passages quoted by Maimonides are widely attested. All three passages are also found in contemporary and later polemical treatises against Judaism, written by Jewish converts to Islam. Most prominent among them is *Ifhām al-yahūd*, a polemical treatise written by the mathematician, physician and polemist Samaw’al al-Maghribī (ca. 1125–75) after his conversion to Islam. Some scholars, in fact, believe that Maimonides’ refutation of the Muslim interpretation of the three biblical passages was in specific response to Samaw’al. As for Jewish authors prior to Maimonides contesting the Muslim interpretation of these biblical verses, see Sa’adia Gaon, *Sefer ha-nivḥar ba-emunot u-va-de’ot le-rabbenu Se’adyah ben Yosef Fayyumi: Maqor we-targum*, 6th edn, trans. Yosef Qafih (Kiryat Ono: Makhon Moshe, 2004), 137; trans. into English by Samuel Rosenblatt, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), 165, on Deuteronomy 33:2 and Ibn Daud, *The Exalted Faith*, 278 [179a], for Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 and 33:2.

159 The *tabdīl* (“alteration”) and *tahrīf* (“falsification”) of the Torah were favorite topics in Islamic anti-Jewish polemics, along with *nasj* (“abrogation”). On this topic, see Jean-Marie Gaudeul and Robert Caspar, “Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le *tahrīf* (falsification) des Écritures,” *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980): 61–104; Norman Roth, “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah: A Theme in Muslim and Christian Polemic in Spain,” *PAAJR* 54 (1987): 201–36; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 19–35; Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 223–48.

160 He actually sees a cryptic allusion to this attitude in the names of Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, Ishmael’s sons, terms he interprets as “listen,” “be silent,” and “endure.”

161 On Maimonides’ concept of messianic times, see Kraemer, “On Maimonides’ Messianic Posture;” David Novak, “Maimonides Concept of the Messiah,” *Journal of Religious Studies* 9, no. 2 (1982): 42–50; Aryeh Botwinick, “Maimonides’ Messianic Age,” *Judaism* 33, no. 4 (1984): 418–25; Lea Naomi Goldfeld, “The Laws of Kings, Wars, and the King Messiah according to Maimonides’ Mishneh Torah,” in Peláez del Rosal, *Sobre la vida y obra de Maimónides*, 243–50.

162 See above, 87 and 150, note 6.

163 Talmon, “Pursuit of the Millennium,” 136.

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Abbreviations

<i>AJS Review</i>	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>Annales ESC</i>	<i>Annales: Économies Sociétés Civilisations</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School for Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i>
<i>EI²</i>	<i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i> , 2nd edn
<i>EJ</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>EOBA</i>	<i>Estudios Onomástico Bibliográficos de al-Andalus</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>IS</i>	<i>Islamic Studies</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JQ</i>	<i>The Jerusalem Quarterly</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>MEAH</i>	<i>Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos</i>
<i>MGWJ</i>	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
<i>MR</i>	<i>Maghreb Review</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Moslem World</i>
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>
<i>QSA</i>	<i>Quaderni di Studi Arabi</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des Études Juives</i>

<i>REMMM</i>	<i>Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>ROMM</i>	<i>Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>SUNY Press</i>	<i>State University of New York Press</i>
<i>WCJS</i>	<i>World Congress of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

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